



BALLYCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

Mobile Phone Policy

- *Approval by the Board of Governors: **September 2016***
- *The implementation of this policy will be monitored by: Senior Management Team*
- *This policy will be reviewed every two years*





Ballycastle High School recognises that mobile phones are part of everyday life and can bring significant benefits for both adults and young people. We also recognise that parents/guardians may wish their children to have mobile phones for use in cases of emergency and for efficient communication.

However, mobiles can be used inappropriately and may play a significant part in relation to issues such as bullying, as well as being a potential target for theft. In addition, the increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology can present a number of serious problems in a school context:

- The high value of many phones
- The integration of cameras into phones which can lead to potential Child Protection and data protection issues
- The potential use of phones for texting/bullying while on silent mode
- The use of Bluetooth technology which could result in the transmission of unsuitable material.

WE RECOMMEND THAT MOBILE PHONES ARE NOT BROUGHT TO SCHOOL.

The school sees no reason for pupils to bring other electronic music or games devices to school.

However, if a parent/guardian feels that it is essential for their child to have a mobile phone in school, it is our policy to allow this under the following conditions:

- Mobile phones should not be used on school premises by pupils in school hours (including break time and lunchtime).
- **PUPILS SHOULD KEEP MOBILE PHONES OUT OF SIGHT DURING SCHOOL HOURS.**
- Phones are not to be visible, in hands or on a desk during a lesson.
- Phones are not to be switched on during the school day.
- In the case of extra-curricular activities, off-site trips, visits and exchanges, and other off-site activities, their use is not allowed unless specifically permitted by the teacher in charge.
- In very unusual circumstances, such as a family emergency or exceptional medical need, pupils and or parents/carers should seek guidance from appropriate staff who will advise them about contacting home. Otherwise communication between home and pupils should be made via the school office.

Pupils should not use their mobile phone to inform parents that they are sick. Illness should be reported through the normal in-school channels and a member of staff will contact home.

PUPILS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO TAKE OUT OR USE A MOBILE PHONE ON THE SCHOOL'S PREMISES/GROUNDS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY.

Any breach of these rules will result in the following consequences:

First offence:

The mobile phone will be confiscated and sent to the office, to be collected by the pupil at the end of the school day. The pupil's name will be recorded and a letter will be sent home with a warning.

Second offence:

The mobile phone will be confiscated and sent to the office. It may only be collected from the Principal. A further letter will be sent home and a lunchtime detention will ensue.

Third offence:

The mobile phone will be confiscated and sent to the office. It may only be collected by a parent or guardian. This will incur a further two detentions and a warning letter.

Fourth offence:

The mobile phone will be confiscated and sent to the office. It may only be collected by a parent or guardian. A suspension may ensue.

Any pupil who persistently refuses to cooperate with these rules will be subject to the school's procedures governing good behaviour.

In addition, a pupil will be required to hand over the phone to a member of staff in the following circumstances:

- If the mobile phone is VISIBLE.



- If a member of the staff of the school has any suspicion that a mobile phone has unsuitable material stored on it.
- If a pupil has disrupted a lesson through the use of a phone.
- If a pupil has used a phone to take photographs on the school site or has used it for any form of bullying. In such a case, parents will be asked to collect it from a senior member of staff.
- Mobile phones must be surrendered to the Chief Examination Officer in examination rooms. Breach of this rule will lead to invalidation of that examination and potentially other examinations.

Any failure to comply with the above guidelines may result in normal disciplinary action.

In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the phone will be handed over to the police for further investigation. Parents will need to recover the phone from the police in such circumstances.

If there is an emergency which requires communication with home, a pupil must speak to a Year Head/member of the office staff who will deal with the matter.

IF A PARENT/CARER WISHES TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR CHILD, SHE/HE SHOULD PHONE THE OFFICE AND THE PUPIL WILL BE CONTACTED BY A MEMBER OF THE OFFICE STAFF.

PUPILS REMAIN RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN PROPERTY AND WILL BEAR THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY LOSSES SHOULD THEY CHOOSE TO BRING MOBILES INTO SCHOOL. THE SCHOOL WILL TAKE NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY MOBILE PHONES LOST, BROKEN OR STOLEN IN SCHOOL.

BALLYCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL BEARS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONFISCATED ITEMS.

Parents should be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to pupils having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety, there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate use. Possession of a mobile phone

can put vulnerable pupils at risk. In light of this, we would expect parents/carers to support us fully in the implementation of this policy.

IF A PUPIL IS FOUND GUILTY OF INAPPROPRIATE USE OF A MOBILE PHONE, SHE/HE WILL FORFEIT THE RIGHT TO BRING A MOBILE PHONE INTO SCHOOL. IN THE EVENT OF A MOBILE PHONE SUBSEQUENTLY BEING BROUGHT TO SCHOOL, FURTHER SANCTIONS MAY BE TAKEN IN LINE WITH SCHOOL POLICIES.