

Mobile Phones & Electronic Devices Policy

Purpose

The widespread ownership of electronic devices and mobile phones among young people requires that all staff, students, and parents take steps to ensure that they are used responsibly at school. This policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving electronic devices and mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that they provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.

Rationale - Personal Safety and Security

Newry High School accepts that parents give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about students travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to School. It is acknowledged that providing students with mobile phones gives parents reassurance that they can contact their children if they need to speak to them urgently.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of students who bring electronic devices and mobile phones to School to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document. Parents should also be aware and understand the guidelines if their child takes an electronic device or mobile phone to School.

Acceptable Uses

Students may possess and use electronic devices at school subject to the following:

- students may use electronic devices appropriately before school, after school, and during breaks.
- students may carry or possess electronic devices at school and school-sponsored activities.
- electronic devices must be **turned off, not set to vibrate**, and **kept out of sight** during class time.
- at no time may electronic devices be used in changing rooms or toilets.

Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the School Reception remains a vital and appropriate point of contact as it will ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in an appropriate way.

Unacceptable Uses and Inappropriate conduct

Unless permission is granted by a member of staff, mobile phones and electronic devices belonging to students **should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during school lessons and other educational activities e.g. school trips**

It is forbidden for students to use their mobile phones and electronic devices to take videos and pictures to denigrate and humiliate any member of the School Community, and/or to send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any member of the School Community without his/her consent.

Students with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal.

Any student/s caught using a mobile phone to cheat in exams or assessments will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal and/or examination board.

Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal

(It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. If appropriate the PSNI will be contacted).

Sanctions

Students who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phones confiscated by teachers.

On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone will be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. The student will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day and a record will be made of the incident. A letter will also be sent to the parent/carer to inform them of the incident.

On the second infringement the mobile phone will be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. Parents will be notified and the pupil will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/carer's consent. If a parent/carer is unable to attend the school they are permitted to phone and give verbal consent for their child to collect the phone and must speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Head of Year. The incident will be recorded.

On the third infringement the mobile phone will be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school office. Parents will be notified and the pupil will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/carer present. After the third infringement the school will withdraw the agreement to allow the student to bring the mobile telephone to school.

As set out in the previous section, failure to adhere to the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident being referred to the PSNI for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.

Theft or damage

To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

(Ratified by the BOG March 2012)