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Guidance and rules regarding the use of mobile phones and other devices in the Secondary School

Version and Date		Action/Notes
V1	10 January 2018	Reviewed and agreed by SEC
V2	June 2022	Reviewed - removed reference to S1-S5 common rooms
Review Date September 2023		Need reviewing for BYOD

Mobile phones and smart watches are now a feature of modern society and most of our secondary students own one. The increasing sophistication of mobile phone/smart watch technology presents a number of issues for schools:

- The high value of many phones/smart watches
- Phones with cameras can lead to potential child protection and data protection issues
- The potential use of the phone/smart watch e.g. for texting whilst on silent mode
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones/smart watches to bully, intimidate, ridicule others

The school recognises that a balance needs to be struck between the useful and pedagogical aspects of technology and its negative aspects. Mobile phones are invaluable for short urgent communication between parents and children, but can be a distraction from the educational and social function of schooling. Our aim in this document is to produce guidelines and rules that seek to strike a proper balance.

Secondary

The school management is aware of the need for some pupils to carry mobile phones for personal safety and protection while travelling to and from school. For this reason, mobile phones are allowed, but their use in the school buildings, on the school grounds or while on school activities is banned. The only exceptions to this

rule are that mobile phones may be used in the reception on request and in the S6 & S7 common rooms.. Mobile phones must be switched off at all times and they are confiscated from pupils in breach of this rule. This includes the practice of having the mobile phone in pockets and using them to listen to music with an earplug. Headphones should not be worn about the school. Confiscated mobiles (and headphones) may be collected at Reception after school. An incident slip is filled in and this record is kept by the reception staff. If the phone is confiscated a second time, pupils will receive a school detention.

Potential for the use of Mobile Phones in Teaching and learning

The school management however recognises the potential of mobile phones to aid teaching and learning and we consider that pupils should have the opportunity to use mobile phones in the **classroom with the teacher's permission**. Examples of permitted use could be taking a photograph of the whiteboard or a science experiment or using an internet search to develop an idea. Teachers would be expected to take into account that not all students have mobile phones. The permitted use must be inclusive of the group, occur infrequently and not be too time-consuming.

Without the teacher's authorisation, any use of mobile phones would still be against the rules. Teachers may check any phone used without a teacher's authorisation and request that any created files are deleted. It is forbidden for students to take any pictures or videos of the members of the school community without their verbal or written permission. It is also forbidden to use pictures or videos for any purposes that might harm the person's image in any way. Any student who uses a mobile phone without a teacher's authorisation will face disciplinary action and sanctions by the teacher, counsellors or the management of the school.

Other Devices

The school management are aware that some students bring other devices to school such as laptops, tablets, music players, personal organisers, digital cameras, camcorders, gaming devices, smart watches etc.

These devices do not provide any personal safety to the child travelling to and from school and therefore students are discouraged from bringing them to school and the use of such personal devices in the school buildings, on the school grounds or while on school activities is banned. The sanctions for their unauthorised use will be the same as those for mobile phones.

There may however be some exceptional circumstances where the use of such devices for learning will be permitted by teachers. This includes the use of a book reading tablet for reading in lessons or the library or a laptop during lessons for specific learning support agreed by the learning support coordinator and the director.

Additionally, the use of electronic devices may be permitted for media related projects and school activities and trips (e.g. MEC).