



# Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Policy

## Introductory Statement

This policy was drawn up in 2024 in response to technological advances which have seen a significant increase in hand held electronic 'gadgets' amongst the school population over recent years.

## Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector.

Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore, the school strongly discourages the bringing of mobile phones to school by students.

In addition, they are a potential and real source of bullying and abuse through texting and the dissemination of unacceptable and inappropriate images

The school is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below.

Use of mobile phones (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including:

- Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft
- Mobile phones (and their cost and level of sophistication – or otherwise) can make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying
- Even when apparently silent, the use of mobiles phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline



- Use of the newer phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images
- Many of the above issues also pertain to I-Pods, tablets, electronic gaming devices, Electronic Watches with cameras etc. They can be very intrusive, distracting and antisocial in a school environment
- Strategies must be put in place to reduce the intrusiveness of unauthorised technology in a school situation
- Some electronic devices may be harmful due to frequent use
- Mobile phones may be used to conduct bullying campaigns

### **Relationship to School Ethos**

The unauthorized use of mobile phones and other electronic gadgets contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment conducive to learning, a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of Scoil Fhiachna.

### **Aims**

- To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones at our school. To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.
- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning

### **School Guidelines**

The following procedures have been put in place to ensure minimal and safe usage of mobile phones and electronic devices in our school;

- The use of personal mobile/smart phones and other personal devices by pupils who attend the school is not allowed while the pupils are in the care of the school staff, while at school, on trips from the school or involved in extra-curricular activities. The children should, therefore, not bring mobile phones and other personal devices to school or when engaging in school-related activities.
- Pupils who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the school secretary using the school landline phone (027 - 63596)



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- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact and can ensure that your child is reached quickly and a message passed onto them.

**In the event that a parent thinks that their child having a phone in school is essential, the following will apply:**

- Parents must send a letter to the Principal requesting that their child be permitted to bring his/her mobile phone/device to school. The letter should be addressed to the Principal and should indicate clearly the necessity for their child having a mobile phone at school. This letter will be kept on file and presented to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. One letter per school year must be issued. The decision of the Board of Management in relation to such requests is final.
- For medical reasons, a child may need to have a mobile phone for 'diabetes readings/scanning', the same procedures outline will be adhered to.
- The phone must be turned off throughout the school day and stored in the pupil's bag. Scoil Fhiachna, Glengarriff accepts no liability for phones lost/stolen/damaged while on the school premises/grounds.
- The pupil's name must be attached to the back of the phone for identity purposes.

**School Procedures**

- Any child found to have a phone/personal device in school without a parental letter will have the phone/device confiscated by the class teacher and presented to the Principal. The principal will store it in the school office. The phone will not be returned until a parent/guardian collects it. Similarly, the use of all personal electronic devices is not permitted during the school day - this includes arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.
- Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other personal device for any purpose, it will be confiscated from the pupil, given to the principal and returned only when the parent/guardian collects it.



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- The school will not be liable for replacing mobile phones or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged.
- Additionally, the school staff and Board of Management will ensure that educational talks and information will be provided for pupils, parents and staff so as to ensure pupils, parents and staff are educated on the risks associated with mobile phones, tablets or internet enabled devices – such as cyber bullying, social media security and content. **Internet Safety Day** will be celebrated annually in the school. Again, this is keeping with the schools Acceptable Use Policy. Children and parents will be informed of the resources such as [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills.
- The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and Acceptable Use Policy, and will treat breaches in the same manner as any other breach of these policies.
- If a pupil uses a mobile phone or personal device to take photographs, video footage or recording of other pupils or staff members, or shares inappropriate messages this will be regarded as a Level 2 or Level 3 inappropriate behaviour, and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the School's Code of Behaviour.

### **Mobile Phone Use by Staff**

- All staff should have their phones on them during the school day on case of emergency.
- It is acknowledged that teachers and SNAs may need to be contactable by their family/their own children's school etc. during the day. Staff personal calls on their mobile phones may be answered in cases of such emergencies.
- The Principal/Deputy Principal may have her/his mobile phone turned on at all times when in classrooms, so that they are contactable by the office/staff (in case of emergency) at all times.
- Staff personal mobile phones may also be used to contact the Principal/office in the case of an emergency in the classroom/yard/school outings etc.



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- Staff personal calls and texts are ordinarily confined to break times (but not while on yard duty).
- Classroom supervision is usually organised if a class teacher has to contact other professionals or outside agencies in relation to a particular child.
- The organisation of school events such as sporting games, events etc. and calls relating to school business may also be received and made on teacher's personal phones during the school day, as well as the school landline.

**It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/personal device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the school in this regard is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí.**

### **School Trips and Outings**

- Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones and other personal devices with them on school trips and tours.
- Teachers will have a contact number for each parent in the event that it is necessary to make contact with a parent/guardian
- Pupils are not permitted to bring any other form of electronic device with them on school tours or trips.
- Pupils may not bring cameras with them on school trips and tours. The school digital camera will be brought on school trips and tours for the purpose of taking photos.
- Any pupil found using a mobile phone/electronic device/camera at after school activities or on school trips or tours will have them confiscated and such devices will not be returned until a parent/guardian collects them.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

- All aspects of this policy will be discussed with all pupils by the class teacher, the principal and parents/guardians.



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- The class teacher will have a list of the pupils who have permission from the Board of Management to bring a mobile phone and/or an electronic device to school.
- Devices that are confiscated will be switched off and given to the principal for safe-keeping.
- This policy will form part of the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Any breach of this policy will be treated in the same way as any breach of the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Pupils using mobile phones or electronic devices to bully other children or send offensive messages/calls outside school which impacts a child/children in school will be investigated and both sets of parents/guardians will be notified.

A copy of the Mobile phone and Devices Policy is made available to school personnel and to the Parents' Association. The policy is readily accessible to parents on request. A copy of the policy is also published on the school website at [www.glengarriffns.ie](http://www.glengarriffns.ie)

### **Review Procedure**

The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. It will be reviewed by the full staff and Board of Management every three years or when any adjustments to procedures need to be implemented. Next review of this policy will occur during the school year of 2027/2028

### **Ratification of Policy:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson Board of Management



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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Principal