# Mobile Phone Policy

**Introductory Statement:**

This policy was drawn up in response to technological advances, which have seen a significant increase in hand held electronic devices amongst the pupils and in pupils' use of mobile phones over recent months.

**Rationale:**

- Mobile phones, IPods, PSP's, MP3's etc. are intrusive and distracting 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 use of mobile phones, recording devices and other electronic games contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment and is not conducive to learning - a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of our school.

**Aim of Policy:**

School Management is introducing a policy which prohibits the use by pupils of mobile phones while on school premises or involved in school activities such as tours/ trips or extra-curricular activities, in order to create a safer environment and to lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning.

**The pupils should therefore not bring mobile phones to school or when engaging in school-related activities and therefore the school will accept no responsibility for replacing mobile phones that are lost, stolen or damaged.**

**Guidelines/Procedures:**

**The pupils should not bring mobile phones to school or when involved in school activities such as tours/ trips or extra-curricular activities**

- **Pupils who ignore this policy and who are found in possession of a mobile on school premises, without permission, will be required to hand over their phone to a member of staff and parents will be asked to collect it from the principal's office after a period of one school week.**

- **The school will incorporate this policy in the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti- Bullying policies and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of school discipline**

- **Pupils using mobile phones to bully other pupils in our school or send offensive messages/calls will face disciplinary actions as per the school Code of Behaviour and Anti- Bullying policy. This type of misbehaviour is deemed to fall under the term 'Serious Misbehaviour' as defined by our school's Code of Behaviour.**

  **NOTE:**
  - **Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.**
  - **However, in the context of our Anti- Bullying policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.**

- **The taking of unauthorised photos or recordings of other students or staff members will be deemed to fall under the term 'Gross Misbehaviour' as defined by our school's Code of Behaviour. This behaviour will be sanctioned by means of suspension.**

- **It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. Students with mobile phones must not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person, via SMS messages/chat rooms/social network sites, taking/sending/uploading photos, phone calls. Circulating objectionable images will also be treated as a serious disciplinary issue, i.e Gross Misbehaviour. The school reserves the right to notify and/or advise the relevant authorities (to include the garda authorities) of any such conduct or behaviour.**

- If a teacher has any suspicion that a mobile phone has unsuitable material stored on it, pupils will be required to hand over the phone to a teacher and parents will be notified and if appropriate asked to collect it from the school. Where there is suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the Gardai for further investigation. Parents will be informed in such circumstances

- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

- The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school

Mobile phones which are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located, should be handed to the principal.

## Emergency contact with parents/guardians:

- Should a parent /guardian wish to contact his/her daughter during the school day or school related activity, he/she may do so by contacting the school secretary on 059 9142343/059 9143439
- Should a pupil wish to contact her parent/guardian during the school day or school related activity, she may do so by arranging a phone call through the school secretary and/or principal

## Exceptional circumstances:

- If a parent/guardian deems that his/her daughter needs her mobile phone on a particular day, the parent/guardian must come to the principal's office that morning, to 'sign in' the phone and the reason for which it is needed. The phone needs to be:

(a) Clearly labelled with child's name.

(b) Switched off at the school gate – before entering school grounds.

(c) Given by the parent/guardian to the principal before class begins – phones will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in the principal's office

(d) Phones will be returned at home time and not switched on until the pupil is outside the school gate or off the school premises.

The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

**The BoM trusts that these guidelines will assist parents/guardians in addressing any difficulty that may arise when talking with and advising your child regarding the use of their mobile phone.**

**Ratified by Board of Management on 28th April, 2015**

**Fr. Thomas Little, Chairperson- Board of Management**

**Implementation date: 11th May, 2015**

**Review date: May, 2016**