

Policy on the Use of Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices

Rationale

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

Use of mobile phones (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including being a distraction to learning, causing discipline problems or being a method of bullying, to menace, harass or offend another person. The issue of privacy is also a concern and is related to the ability of most phones to take photographs, make video recordings or record. In order to manage the issue of mobile phones this policy has been introduced.

Relationship to Our School Ethos

The use of mobile phones 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 ethos of Inver National School.

Aim of Policy

The Board of Management of Inver National School has introduced this policy which prohibits the use of mobile phones by students while on school property or involved in school activities such as tours/trips, extra-curricular activities and sports events in order to create a safer environment and to lessen distractions to pupils' learning.

School Procedures

Guidelines for Students

The use of mobile phones by pupils who attend the school is strictly prohibited while the pupils are in the care of the school staff, while at school or on school trips/outings. The pupils should therefore not bring their mobile phones to school or when engaging in school related activities.

Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school landline remains the first point of contact and can ensure a message is passed on to your child quickly.

Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so using the school landline with the permission of the school principal.

Should a parent feel that is essential that their child have a mobile phone in school, this matter must be discussed with the school principal and permission sought from the Board of Management.

Inappropriate Conduct and Sanctions

1. Any student whose phone is seen or heard by any member of school staff on school property or on off-site activities e.g school tours, sports activities, whether or not the phone is switched on will have their phone confiscated. The phone will be kept by the Principal. The phone will be collected by a parent/guardian. The parent/guardian must agree to enforce the mobile phone policy with the child who owns the phone.
2. Students using mobile phones or similar devices to bully, harass or take pictures of other children, staff members or others will face disciplinary actions. The parent(s)/guardian of the offending child will be requested to come to school to discuss the matter.
3. If a child uses a phone /similar device to record or take pictures of a member of staff without the staff member's permission the parent(s)/ guardian of the offending child will be requested to come to school to discuss the matter. The phone will not be returned to the child until the images/ recordings have been dealt with to the satisfaction of the Principal.
4. The use of mobile phones or other electronic devices by parents/guardians to take photographs/videos /other recordings of children other than their own children, while on school grounds /while attending school events is strictly prohibited.
5. The school will not be liable for replacing mobile phones, or other devices which have been banned by the school that are lost, stolen or damaged.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action sanctioned by the Principal is deemed ineffective, the school may consider it appropriate to inform the Gardai and/or Tusla.

The 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 gross disciplinary issue. Infringements under section 2 and 3 above may result in the matter being referred to the Gardai and/or Tusla. In such cases the parent(s)/ guardian will be informed.

Guidelines and procedures for Staff

- If a class teacher has to contact other professionals or outside agencies in relation to a particular child, this contact is then made using the school landline.
- The organization of school events such as sporting events should be made on the school landline.
- Staff personal mobile phones may be used to contact the Principal/office in the case of an emergency in the classroom/playground etc.
- All staff should have their mobile phones on silent during class time.

- Teachers and support staff may need to be contactable by their family/their children's school etc. during the day. Staff personal calls on their mobile phones may be answered in the case of such emergencies.

Guidelines and procedures for Parents

- Parents should contact the school via the landline to get a message to their child/children.
- Parents are asked not to contact teachers on their personal mobile phones regarding school matters. Exceptions can be made in the case of emergencies.
- Any school issues should be communicated by parents using the school landline during school hours.

Use of Cameras

Use of personal cameras/camcorders or any recording device by parents/guardians and/or children/visitors, is regulated on school premises or at school related events.

Any photographs or recordings at such events by the school are used for school purposes and parental/guardian permission is sought in advance on a school consent form.

Inver National School takes no responsibility for any photographs or recordings of school events that are uploaded onto any social media site.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians, staff and pupils to adhere to this policy. Any student who is feeling unwell at school and needs to go home, or who needs to contact their parents for any other reason must arrange this through the class teacher/Principal.

Parent(s)/Guardians seeking to pass a message onto their child can do so through school staff.

Teachers and staff members who accompany children on school outings and to sports events will have a mobile phone with them. Parents can be contacted using this mobile phone if deemed necessary.

Evaluation

This policy was drafted in June 2019 and ratified by the board on 17th June 2019. The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy and review and amend as necessary in the light of experience.

Signed:Chairperson

Signed:Principal/Secretary

Date:

