



## **Greystones CNS – Mobile Phone & Electronic Device Policy**

This policy outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones and electronic recording devices in our school. In reading the policy, the reader will note that the term mobile phone will also include smart watches connected to a mobile phone and also smart watches with their own SIM card that can make calls without being connected to a mobile phone.

**Only parents/guardians of children in 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Class can apply for permission to bring a mobile phone.**

- **Children in Greystones CNS are not permitted to bring any other type of devices to school that can make recordings of sound, images or video. (e.g. fitbits, digital camera)**
- **Children from Junior Infants-2<sup>nd</sup> class are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school under any circumstances.**

### **Rationale**

The possession and use of mobile phones by school pupils is now extensive. Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. **Therefore, the school strongly recommends that students do not bring mobile phones to school.**

Use of mobile 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 could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline (e.g. texting, recording)
- Use of the phones to record could lead to child protection issues and/or data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of sound/images/video.

### **Aims**

- To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones at our school if parents feel it is necessary for their child to have one. To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

The school is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises for children in 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below.

From 3<sup>rd</sup> Class upwards pupils are allowed to walk to school/home alone. As such parents may wish their children to be contactable during these journeys in case of emergency.

However, it is the school's policy to prohibit the unauthorised use by pupils of mobile phones while on school premises, grounds or off-site activities e.g. school swimming, trips to library, shows etc.

### **Guidelines for Parents and Pupils**

The school discourages (and asks all parents to discourage) pupils from bringing mobile phones to schools on the grounds that they are valuable and may be lost or stolen.

Only parents of children from **3rd class upwards** are allowed to seek permission to have a mobile phone at school and **we would ask that parents only ask if they feel it is absolutely necessary to ensure a safe commute to and from school.**

Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone to school, **the phone must remain switched off during the school day** and placed inside their bag and may not be used, for any purpose, on school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as school swimming or sports activities.)

**Please note a smart watch must also be turned off and placed inside their bag during the school day.**

Parents are reminded that in cases of urgent contact or an emergency during the school day, the school office remains the only point of contact that should be used.

Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other electronic device during the school the phone/device will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent, guardian following a meeting with the class teacher or other nominated staff member. Repeated instances of this will be treated as Gross Misbehaviour in our Code of Behaviour and may result in revocation of permission to bring a phone to school.

The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of the Code.

**The school will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices. The decision to bring a device to school is entirely at the parent/guardian's risk.**

If a pupil is found taking photographs/video footage/recording sounds with a device of either other pupils or staff or sharing inappropriate messages this will be regarded as an example of Gross Misbehaviour offence and disciplinary action will be taken according to the school's Code of Behaviour Policy.

If images of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a teacher or when the parent comes to collect the phone. Parents/Guardians will have to ensure that these images/videos have not been backed up to cloud storage. If they have been shared the parent will endeavour to have them deleted and will inform the school of this fact.

### **Application for Permission to bring a phone**

Where a parent feels that their child having a phone in school is essential they will complete Appendix A and their child Appendix B and accept the following conditions:

- Parents must complete Appendix A requesting that their child be permitted to bring his/her mobile phone to school.
- Parents must commit to ensuring that their child will not turn the phone on at any point during the school day (in school or off site activities) except with the express permission of supervising staff member.
- Parents will acknowledge that the school is not liable for phones being lost or stolen that you have chosen to allow your child to bring to school.
- Investigations into lost/stolen phones are not the school's responsibility.
- In the event of their child recording sound/images/video the parent will commit to deleting these from their child's phone on collection of the phone, from the cloud if stored there, except in the event that it is required for a Garda/Tusla investigation.
- Parents will also endeavour to ensure that sound/images/video that were shared deleted and inform the school if this has happened.
- In the event of confiscation for use during the school day parents will note that they will have to call to the school to collect same and will discuss this breach of behaviour with their child.
- Once appendix A has been completed this will give permission from 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class unless permission is revoked by the school for frequent improper use.

### **School Trips and Outings.**

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones with them on school trips and tours, except where that trip will not end back at school. A contact number will be provided for parents which may be used by them to contact the teacher on the trip.

### **Guidelines for Staff**

Please keep any confiscated phones secure and give to the office at first opportunity labelled with the child's name and class number and ask Marie to call the parent. Where possible, the class teacher will meet with parent at end of day to return the phone and discuss appropriate behaviour in relation to its use moving forward.

This policy will be reviewed as necessary.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix A

**Parent Request form for use of Mobile Phone for children in 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Class at Greystones CNS**

(Please use Block Capitals here)

I \_\_\_\_\_, Parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_

request permission for my child to bring their mobile phone to school so they can be contacted in the event of emergency on the way to or from school.

**Important Information:**

- Parents will ensure that their child will not turn the phone on at any point during the school day (in school or off site activities) except with the express permission of supervising staff member.
- Parents accept that the school is not liable for phones being lost or stolen that you have chosen to allow your child to bring to school.
- Parents accept that investigations into lost/stolen phones are not the school's responsibility.
- Parents accept that if pictures/recordings(audio or video) of other pupils or teachers have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a teacher or when the parent comes to collect the phone. Parents/Guardians will also commit to ensuring that these images/videos have not been backed up to cloud storage and if they have will be deleted immediately, preferably in the presence of the teacher (except if those images/recordings are potentially required for a garda/tusla investigation). They will also commit to ensuring that if the pictures/videos were shared with another person they will notify the school and endeavour to have those deleted also.
- In the event of confiscation for improper use, parents accept that they will have to call to the school to collect same and will discuss this breach of behaviour with their child.
- Parents accept that the school can revoke this permission for frequent improper use and that the principal's decision is final.
- Parents accept that if they need to make urgent contact with their child during the school day they will not attempt to contact their child via mobile phone and that the school office remains the only point of contact that should be used.
- **Please sign below to demonstrate that you have read and understood this information and agree to adhere to it.**

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B – Agreement between Child and Class Teacher regarding mobile phones in school.**

I \_\_\_\_\_, understand that I cannot use my phone during the day without the express permission of my teacher and that this will rarely, if ever happen.

I know that the phone must remain in my bag throughout the day and is only ever removed from my bag once I have left the school site.

I understand that if the above rules are not followed the phone will be confiscated by a teacher and will only be returned when a parent/guardian has called to meet with my teacher.

I further understand that permission to bring the phone to school may be removed permanently if I do not follow the above rules.

I know that I cannot use any personal device in school that records sound, video or pictures.

I know that the only reason I bring this phone to school is because my parents/guardians want me to be contactable on my journey to and from school.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_