

POLICY ON THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES



Rationale

The use of mobile phones and other internet-enabled electronic communication devices by students has become widespread, even within the primary school sector. While these devices can offer educational benefits, their presence in schools also raises several significant concerns.

Mobile phones, especially those with advanced features such as cameras, internet access and recording capabilities (including smartwatches) can pose as a significant distraction to learning and have the potential to cause disciplinary issues. They may also be misused as tools for bullying, harassment or offensive behaviour. Furthermore, the ability to capture photographs, videos and audio recordings without consent poses serious privacy concerns for both students and staff.

Given these challenges, this policy has been reviewed to ensure the appropriate management of mobile phones and internet-enabled communication devices in the school environment.

Circular 0044/2025

Following the publication of Circular 0044/2025, schools are now required to implement a policy to ban the use of and access to, personal mobile phones by pupils in all recognised schools for the duration of the school day.

This policy is intended to:

- Improve the learning environment in schools by reducing distraction
- Reduce the risk of cyberbullying and access to inappropriate content during school hours
- Increase traditional social interactions between pupils and students at school break times.

The policy to ban the use of phones by pupils during the school day, outside of limited exceptions, will enable Ratoath Senior National School to provide a phone-free environment, to support pupils' wellbeing, concentration, academic performance and development.

Relationship to Our School Ethos

The use of mobile phones, internet-enabled electronic communication devices such as smart watches 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 Ratoath Senior National School.

Aim of Policy

The Board of Management of Ratoath Senior National School is introducing a policy which prohibits the use by students of mobile phones/internet-enabled electronic devices/wearable communication devices while on school premises 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 intrusions on and distractions to children's learning.

School Procedures

Pupils are not permitted to use personal devices that are internet-enabled or capable of communication at any time while on school premises. Such devices include, but are not limited to, mobile phones, smartwatches, gaming devices, digital music players, and other wearable communication technologies. Devices designed for messaging, calling, or tracking—such as Imoo watches and similar products—are strictly prohibited during the school day, irrespective of any “school mode” or restricted setting.

The use of mobile phones/ internet-enabled electronic communication devices by children who attend the school is not allowed while the children are in the care of the school staff, while at school or on trips from the school.

The children should therefore not bring mobile phones/internet-enabled electronic communication devices to school or when engaging in school-related activities. The school will not be liable for replacing mobile phones or electronic devices that are stolen, lost or damaged.

Mobile phones/internet-enabled electronic devices which are found in the school should be handed to the principal.

In the interests of protecting all children, the use of cameras/camcorders or any recording device by parents/guardians and/or children/visitors, is strictly prohibited on the school premises or at school related events.

Any photographs or recordings at school events taken by school staff via Aladdin Frame are used for school purposes and parental/guardian written permission is sought in advance of the school event on the School Consent Form.

Ratoath Senior National School does not take responsibility for photographs or recordings of school events that are uploaded onto any/all Social Media Sites.

Pupils are only allowed to use internet-enabled devices during lessons with express permission from teaching staff.

Exceptions may be made, when agreed in writing with the school for medical reasons such as Diabetes blood glucose monitor and/or insulin delivery mechanism following consultation with a teacher and the principal.

In exceptional circumstances and when agreed in writing with the school, if a parent/guardian feels that a child needs a mobile phone/ internet-enabled electronic communication device for contact after school, then the phone/device must be turned off and left in the child’s school bag during the formal school day, including all school outings or events. The school will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices.

Aladdin Frame

Aladdin Frame is a photo management system which allows school staff to securely take photos of student work and activities on this dedicated camera app. It is a secure way to take and share photographs in our school. All photos automatically bypass the camera roll on personal devices and are stored directly and securely in Aladdin. Aladdin Schools uses state-of-the-art security to safeguard photographs taken by the school and these photographs are stored and processed in strict compliance with Irish and European data protection laws.

Inappropriate Conduct and Sanctions

- Any student whose phone or internet-enabled electronic device is **seen or heard by a staff member** on school premises, grounds, or during off-site activities (such as school tours or sporting events), **regardless of whether the device is switched on or in “school mode” or any restricted setting**, will have the device **confiscated**.
- The phone/internet-enabled electronic device should be given to the principal by the teacher. The matter will be treated as a Gross Misbehaviour. (Steps 11 and 12 on the Code of Behaviour) The phone may be collected by a parent(s)/guardian from the principal.
- The parent(s)/guardian(s) who collects the phone/internet-enabled electronic device from the principal must sign out the phone and agree to enforce the mobile phone & internet-enabled electronic device policy with the child who owns the phone.
- Students using mobile phones or internet-enabled electronic devices to bully, harass or take pictures of other children, staff members or others will face disciplinary actions. If it is clear that these offences have taken place then the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the offending child will be requested to come to the school to discuss the matter.
- If a child uses a phone/device to take pictures of or record a member of staff without the staff member’s permission the parent(s)/guardian of the offending child will be requested to come to the school to discuss the matter. The phone/device will not be returned to the child until the images and/or recordings have been deleted to the satisfaction of the principal.
- The use of mobile phones or other electronic devices by parents/guardians to take photographs of children, other than their own children, while on school premises is strictly prohibited.

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 as sanctioned by the principal is deemed ineffective, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí. Hence, 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 Gardaí. In such case the parents/guardian will be informed.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of parents/guardian(s), staff and children 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 reason must arrange this through the secretary in the office. Parent(s)/guardians seeking to pass a message onto their child can do so through the secretary in the office.

Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure their child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way during school hours. The office phone number is: 01 825 4470 and it will be answered between 9.20 a.m. - 3.00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

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

involved in after school sports/extra-curricular activities will be able to use the school mobile phone to contact their parents/ guardians.

If this policy is not adhered to by a pupil, the phone/internet enabled electronic communication device will be confiscated and sent to the principal's office. The phone must then be collected by the parent/guardian. The school will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices.

Implementation

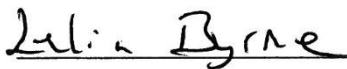
This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Ratoath Senior National School on October 13th, 2025.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and has been provided to the Parents' Association.

Review and Evaluation

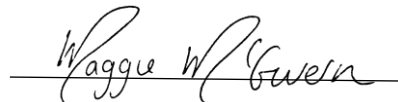
All teachers will endeavour to implement this policy. This document is a working draft and will be subject to ongoing review and revision. A copy will be provided to each teacher, and the policy will be ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed:



Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 13th October 2025



Principal

13th October 2025

Date of next review: October 2026