



Smart Device Policy

Introduction

This policy document aims to provide information and guidelines regarding the children's possession and use of smart technology. We understand that in certain circumstances, children may need to bring mobile phones/smart devices to school in order that they can communicate with parents/guardians on their way to and from school.

It is our clear intention that mobile phones and other devices will not be used by pupils for calls, messaging, posts, photography or recording while they are attending school or school events.

We also acknowledge that the Smartphone Voluntary Code of Practice demonstrates that the majority of parents do not intend to purchase a device for their child during their time in Rathmichael Parish National School.

What is a Smart Device?

A smart device is an electronic device, generally connected to other devices via different wireless protocols such as Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, cellular networks and can operate to some extent interactively by sending and receiving messages and/or calls. It also may have access to the Internet/social media/Bluetooth, and the ability to record sound, video, photographs or other images.

Smart devices can include, but are not limited to, devices such as phones, smart watches, Kindles, i-pads, i-pods, tablets and cameras.

Purpose of this policy:

The purpose of this policy is to reduce as much as possible the risks that may be associated with use of Devices by pupils, including but not limited to:

- Disruption to class
- Distraction of pupils from their school work and/or social engagement
- Loss, theft or damage to property and/or potential associated injury to pupils
- Filming/photographing/recording of others with or without consent and subsequent use of such material.

It aims to

- Outline the regulations relating to smart devices that are brought to school
- Outline what happens should these regulations not be adhered to.

School Rules Relating to Devices:

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a smart device to menace, harass or offend another person. If such circumstances prevail and measures taken by the school are deemed to be ineffective, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí or Tusla.

Pupils failing to follow this policy will face disciplinary action under the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

- Pupils are strongly discouraged from bringing devices to school. The school accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever for any loss, theft or damage of any kind to any device brought by a Pupil to school grounds, or for any consequential loss.
- Pupils who do bring a device must switch it off before entering the school grounds and it must remain in their school bag. Pupils are forbidden to switch their device back on until they leave the school grounds unless with permission of and under supervision by a teacher or the Principal.
- The child's name should be on his/her smart device.
- Pupils should ensure that alarms/reminders are turned off to avoid activation during school hours.
- Devices must not be used for any purpose on school premises, school grounds, during extracurricular activities facilitated by the school or during off-site school activities, e.g. sports activities, school outings/tours etc.
- Pupils who use devices for bullying or for any inappropriate or offensive messages, calls, posts etc. which relate in any way to the school or wider school community, whether made inside or outside school, will face disciplinary actions under the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline.
- In cases where the school feels that a criminal offence may be involved it will not hesitate to notify the Gardaí and/or other relevant authorities. Uploading of any material to a public domain featuring other pupils, staff or the school premises is unacceptable.
- Devices may be confiscated by a teacher, the Principal or school secretary if seen.
- If a teacher or staff member has a suspicion that a device has unsuitable material stored on it, the device may be confiscated.
- In the event of confiscation, devices may be returned to pupils at going home time or their parents/guardians may be contacted to come and collect the device from the school and discuss the matter with the teacher and/or the Principal.
- Where it is felt that there is a possibility that material on the device may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence, the device will be handed over to the Gardaí for further investigation and parents/guardians will be informed.
- Any device found in the school grounds must be handed to a member of staff immediately.
- It is strongly advised that where possible pupils have passwords/PIN numbers to prevent unauthorised use of devices. PINs and passwords should remain confidential.



Phone Policy for Staff

Mindful of the duties and responsibilities of staff in working with children, it is vital that staff be properly engaged at all working times. In this context, access to phones (including mobile phones and similar devices) should be limited to times of urgency only.

Note that reference to “calls” herein includes Texting/Messaging/Use of Social media and the like.

Work Calls

- Calls to parents/guardians should be kept as short as possible. Where a lengthy conversation with parents/guardians is required, appointments should be made to meet parents.
- Calls to other professionals and organisations should be made in consultation with the Principal and classroom supervision will be arranged where appropriate.

Use of work related apps

Dojo, Seesaw, Aladdin and other such work related apps can be used when necessary during the school day.

Personal calls

- In general, personal calls should be carried out during break time.
- In cases of urgency, a staff member should use discretion in making calls.
- Incoming personal calls should be reserved for urgent matters.