

## **Scoil Mhuire Maigh Cuilinn** **Polasaí maidir le Fóin Phóca/Policy regarding Mobile Phones**

### **Introduction**

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire recognises that mobile phones are useful and powerful computing and communications tools upon which modern society has become heavily dependent. It is also aware of the potential risks these devices pose to children and is firm in its view that childhood should, insofar as possible, be kept smartphone free.

Since the advent of mobile phones, it has always been the policy of Scoil Mhuire that our pupils may not bring mobile phones or personal, internet-capable digital devices to school or on school-organised trips such as educational, sporting, cultural artistic or religious events. The school's Acceptable Use Policy and Code of Positive Behaviour refer to the above, as follows:

#### Acceptable Use Policy

##### *Personal Devices*

*The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches, in Scoil Mhuire:*

*Students are not allowed to bring personal internet-enabled devices into Scoil Mhuire.*

#### Code of Positive Behaviour

##### *III. Behaviour in the School Environment and on School Outings*

##### *General Principles and Rules*

*Pupils are expected to:*

*Refrain from bringing prohibited items to school, e.g. mobile phones, internet capable devices....*

### **Rationale**

The Department of Education, in Circular 0044/2025 of June 2025 requires primary schools to implement a policy to ban the use of, and access to, personal mobile phones by pupils for the duration of the school day.

Excessive mobile phone use, and screen time generally, can have a detrimental impact on children's concentration and academic performance. This policy, which prohibits the use of phones by pupils during the school day, outside of very limited and exceptional circumstances, seeks to provide a phone-free environment, to support children's wellbeing, concentration, academic performance, and development.

It will provide a space for children to disconnect from their online world and allow them to become less dependent on their mobile phones. It aims to create an environment conducive to the development of healthy relationships and positive social and emotional development in children through in-person engagement with their peers.

## Policy Statement

**This policy bans access to and use of non-school based/owned Personal Communications Devices by pupils in our school.** Personal Communications Devices include mobile phones, smartwatches containing sim cards and digital devices/tablets containing sim cards.

Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones or digital devices containing sim cards onto the school premises during school hours.

Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones or digital devices containing sim cards to activities organised and/or facilitated by the school that take place outside school hours or outside the school premises, e.g. school tours, sports, field trips, outings, etc.

The school will not facilitate children bringing mobile phones or digital devices containing sim cards onto the school premises for use outside of school (e.g. when travelling to or from school or attending after-school activities).

The school's position is that, if a child owns a mobile phone or a digital device containing a sim card, the item in question must remain at home during the school day and must not be brought to school or to activities organised and/or facilitated by the school.

### SMARTWATCHES

Whereas smartwatches with small screen, displays that are used primarily for time-telling and fitness/activity tracking are permissible, the following types of smartwatches are prohibited in our school

- Smartwatches with large, colourful displays that have the potential to cause distraction in class
- Smartwatches that allow images/video to be captured
- Smartwatches containing sim cards
- Smartwatches that allow incoming/outgoing calls and messages

Other watches such as analogue, digital and/or basic, small-screen fitness/activity tracker watches are permissible in Scoil Mhuire.

### Procedures

If a child is found in possession of a Personal Communications Device **or Prohibited Smartwatch** during school hours, the device will be confiscated and kept in the school office until collected by a parent/guardian.

The child will be required to unlock the Personal Communications Device **or Prohibited Smartwatch** in the presence of the principal or deputy principal and another member of staff, whereupon a check will be carried out of the camera roll to ensure that images have not been recorded during the school day or the school activity. Should any be found, the child will be required to delete them.

Breaches of this policy will be addressed in line with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

The school will not accept responsibility for the loss, theft, or damage of any mobile phone brought onto the premises in breach of this policy.

### Emergency Contact

Parents may make contact with their children through the school office during the school day; messages from parents will be conveyed to children by office staff. Teachers or office staff will contact parents on a child's behalf as necessary, e.g. where the child is injured or unwell, has forgotten his/her lunch, sports gear, etc. or needs clarification regarding arrangements after school.

Parents who need to make urgent contact with their child should phone the school office directly, rather than sending an email to the teacher.

### Exceptions

Children may be allowed to bring mobile phones or smartwatches to school or to school activities in very exceptional circumstances, where access to a mobile phone is required:

1. For the management of a serious medical condition that has been diagnosed and certified by a consulting physician and for which a written care plan has been agreed with the school, wherein the function of the mobile phone is clearly outlined as being necessary for the monitoring/management of said medical condition.
2. For safety reasons, where the child is at substantial risk of harm and documentary evidence to this effect has been supplied to the school, e.g. a court order, correspondence from TUSLA, etc. and a written safety plan has been agreed with the school.

In these circumstances, a written request may be made by the child's parents to the Principal. Permission will be granted only at the discretion of the Principal and Board of Management.

### Communication

This policy will be shared with the school community via email and publication on the school website.

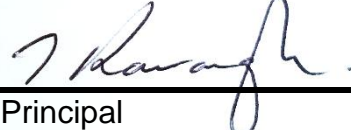
### Review

This policy will be reviewed as required by the Board of Management in consultation with staff and parents.

### Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

Signed  O'Neill  
Chairperson, Board of  
Management

Signed   
Principal