

St. Brendan's College Bray, Co. Wicklow



Policy on the Use of Mobile Phones

This policy was drafted in consultation with the education partners at St. Brendan's College, Bray, Co. Wicklow. It was ratified by the Board of Management at their meeting on December 1st, 2009.

School Policies and Procedures

Title: Policy on the Use of Mobile Phones

Introduction

Mobile phones have become an important and permanent feature of everyday life. However, if not properly regulated they can also have a disruptive effect on classroom teaching and learning. There are also inherent dangers associated with the misuse of mobile phones and staff and students must be protected from any invasion of privacy or harassment associated with such misuse.

In recognising the importance of mobile phones as a means of communication for today's students, the Board of Management of the school seeks to balance the positive against the negative and encourage the responsible use of mobile phones.

Policy

In-school Activities

Students are permitted to bring mobile phones to school under the following conditions:

- Phones must be powered off (or on silent) and out of sight while students are in the school building.
- Phones are the responsibility of the individual student and the Board will accept no responsibility for lost or stolen phones.

Out-of-school Activities

Students are permitted to bring mobile phones on school trips and other extra curricular activities. However, phones remain the responsibility of the individual student and the Board will accept no responsibility for lost or stolen phones.

Misuse

The following misuse of mobile phones at any time will be considered an extremely serious disciplinary matter:

- Taking or sending of inappropriate images.
- Unauthorised recording of staff or students.
- Using the phone to harass or bully another person.
- Posting images of staff or students on social networking sites.

Contact with Home

- Students who feel unwell and need to go home should not contact parents/guardians by mobile phone. Such contact must be made from the school secretary's office on the school phone, so that the school is aware of any such arrangements.
- Parents/guardians are asked not to arrange to contact students by mobile phone during the school day, an arrangement which necessitates the student breaking the school rule. Any necessary contact can be made with a student by telephoning the school office.

Sanctions

- Mobile phones belonging to students which cause disruption to a class by ringing or being used to transmit or receive messages will be treated as a classroom disciplinary matter and will be dealt with through the normal disciplinary system.
- The School Disciplinary Committee and the Board will respond appropriately in cases of unauthorised recording or misuse of mobile phones (as outlined earlier) and will have the full range of sanctions – including exclusion – open to them.
 - In such instances, the school authorities reserve the right to view the contents of the phone, in the presence of the student, to ensure that it contains no images or information which would compromise any member of the school community. Any improper photographs taken in the school building, on the grounds or during any school activity, inside or outside the school, will be deleted in the presence of the student and their parent/guardian before the phone is returned.
 - Furthermore, mobile phones may, at the discretion of the Principal, be retained if it is believed that images contained therein may assist in the investigation of any related or unrelated incident either by the school authorities or the Gardaí.

State Examinations

Examination students are reminded of the Department of Education and Science policy on mobile phones during state examinations.

“A candidate shall not bring into the examination hall, or have in his/her possession or under his/her control or within his/her reach, whilst he/she is in such room:

*a. Any memorandum, notes or **mobile phone**, electronic address book, data bank, etc, except a calculator as permitted under the regulations.”*

Failure to comply with these rules could lead to the cancellation of a paper and years of work wasted.

Parental Support

Parents/guardians are asked to respect the school rules in relation to the use of mobile phones and to support the school's position in this regard.

Use of Mobile Phones by Staff

Mobile phones should not be used by staff during class time unless expressly for school purposes or for emergency use. Phones should be powered off or on silent during class time.