

# **Monaleen N.S.**

## **Mobile Device Policy**

### **Scoil Mhóin-a-Lín**



## Mobile Device Policy

### Introductory Statement:

This policy was drawn up in response to technological advances, which have seen a significant increase in hand held electronic devices amongst the school population over recent years. It replaces the Mobile Device Policy, which was in place from 2019 until 2024. Staff, Parents Association, and Student Council were consulted in the final term of the 2023/24 school year before the policy was subsequently reviewed and updated by the in-school management team (ISM) in September 2024. The entire parent body was also consulted by nature of a poll containing the following question:

*Should children be allowed to carry mobile devices (e.g. phones) to and from school?*

The result of the above poll was over 80% of parents/guardians voting 'no.'

Our ISM team, whilst drawing up the updated policy, were cognisant of the most recent relevant publication from the Department of Education, *Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free* (<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/283424/d5f331c8-a417-410e-8f8d-1be58518317c.pdf#page=null>).

The Mobile Device Policy was ratified by the Board of Management in October 2024 and immediately sent to all parents/guardians and published on the school website.

### Rationale:

- In the past, some children have carried mobile devices with them for safety and security reasons (e.g. walking home after school or after an extra-curricular activity) or for other reasons (entertainment while at after school child-minding etc.).
- Nowadays, data is widely available on the majority of children's smart phones meaning they have direct access to the internet when carrying these devices (e.g. on their way home from school). This data, along with the increased value of such devices, has meant that the advantages of carrying a mobile phone are now outweighed by the dangers of an unsupervised child having one in their possession.
- Mobile phones, gaming systems, tablets, smart watches and other mobile technology are prevalent amongst primary school age children in our society at present.
- Many electronic devices have recording capabilities (audio and or video/photo). Such devices may constitute serious risk of policy breaches around recording and/or photographing children or adults in school or while engaged in school activities (see Acceptable Use Policy and Data Protection Policy).

### Relationship to School Ethos:

Monaleen NS is an inclusive school committed to the holistic education of all of our pupils. The health, safety and wellbeing of all our pupils and staff are of paramount importance.

### Aims:

- To ensure that children and adults conform to the procedures outlined in this policy in relation to the use of mobile devices in school. Parents will be reminded during events (e.g. concerts, shows, graduations etc.) that any pictures and/or recordings are to be respectful of the wishes of others and to be for personal use only.

- To eliminate breaches of privacy caused by unauthorised recording on mobile devices in school or on school trips.
- To eliminate distractions caused by the use of mobile devices during the school day or on school outings.
- To ensure that no incidents of cyber-bullying can take place while the pupils are under the care and supervision of Monaleen National School.
- To enable, empower, and support parents/guardians in the regulation of mobile devices in the home.

### **Internal School Policies & Procedures:**

The following are the guidelines for mobile electronic device usage in the school;

- Children are not allowed to bring mobile devices (including but not limited to mobile phones, smart watches with video/photo/audio recording technology, smart watches which are capable of taking calls and/or receiving messages, smart devices with internet and network capability, gaming consoles, tablets etc.) to school, on school trips or to after-school/extra-curricular activities on or off premises (on premises examples are Coding Club and Art Club, whereas off premises examples are football training at the GAA Field and school tours).
- Exceptional circumstances, for example medical reasons, may need to be catered for (e.g. a child who requires a mobile device and/or an app to monitor their insulin levels during the school day. In this instance they would be assisted by an SNA or another staff member).
- Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the school secretary using the school landline phone.
- If a pupil brings an unauthorised mobile device to school or to school trip/extra-curricular activity, it will be confiscated and kept in the school office until it is collected by a parent/guardian. Additional sanctions may also apply, in accordance with our Code of Behaviour.
- Using a device to create an un-authorised recording/photographing/videoing of a fellow pupil, staff member or visitor to the school may result in serious sanctions. The device will be withheld until a parent or guardian comes to the office and the recordings are deleted.
- Staff members are encouraged to use the school landlines for communication with parents.
- Staff personal calls are normally confined to break times.
- Staff may use their personal devices to take photographs for the website/newsletter/social media etc. As soon as the photograph has been transferred to its intended location, it will be deleted from the staff member's personal device (in accordance with our Acceptable Use Policy and our Data Protection Policy).
- School-owned mobile devices will be used under the supervision of school staff in accordance with GDPR policy (e.g. laptops, chromebooks, iPads etc.).

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

All staff members share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy.

### **Evaluation:**

This policy is reviewed on an ongoing basis and amendments will be made as new technology comes on stream.

### **Communication with parents**

This policy will be sent to all parents on Aladdin Connect and published on the school website thereafter.

### **IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be launched and fully implemented from November 2024. The policy will be reviewed on a two year cycle.

The school management team and staff members will implement this policy.

The Board of Management ratified this policy on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024.

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**Chairperson**

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**Principal**

**Date of Implementation:** November 2024

**Review Date:** November 2026