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**Smartphone, Smartwatch & Tablet Device Policy**

1. **Introductory Statement**

Scoil Mhuire actively promotes the use of digital technologies for teaching, learning and assessment so that our pupils can be engaged thinkers, active learners, knowledge constructors and global citizens. The use of technology is now an integral part of daily life in our school. Our use of technology in the classroom is guided by our Digital Learning Plan and Internet Acceptable Usage Policy. Scoil Mhuire is also cognisant of the need to have an agreed whole school policy to guide the use of smartphones, smartwatches and tablet devices in the classroom and during the school day. This policy is devised in line with the requirements of Department of Education & Skills Circular 0038/2018, *Consultation with the School Community, including Teachers, Students & Parents on the Use of Smart Phones & Tablet Devices in School*.

1. **Rationale**

Scoil Mhuire recognises that digital technologies open new opportunities for learning, promote independent learning and provide access to quality online resources. The use of digital technologies, mediated by the teacher with the skills to exploit the potential of the technologies, can be invaluable in equipping our pupils with the skills to navigate the online world safely.

As a school we are also very cognisant of the associated risks of technology use, including misuse, overuse and abuse of technological devices and their associated technologies. The enhanced functions of many smartphones, smartwatches and tablet devices are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distributing of images and or video recordings of pupils and/or staff to other smartphone users or to social media platforms. Our pupils need to be guided and supported to become good digital citizens in the use of technological devices, both school and personally owned devices, within and outside school.

1. **Aims**

The aims of this policy are:

* To establish clear and robust acceptable use guidelines for the use of smartphones, smartwatches and tablet devices.
* To promote safe and appropriate practice in the use of these digital technologies and their associated technologies.
* To ensure the safe and ethical use of the internet and in turn support the wellbeing of our pupils and staff.
* To minimise occurrences of cyberbullying through the implementation of education programmes and monitoring mechanisms.
1. **Current Practice**

In Scoil Mhuire, parents/guardians may get a message to their child by contacting the school secretary. Likewise, if a pupil needs to contact their parent/guardian, they can do so with the assistance of the school secretary. Pupils are not permitted to use their smartphone or any other personally owned technological device during school time, including school trips and outings, or during after-school activities organised by Scoil Mhuire.

We recognise that some parents/guardians may wish that their child brings a mobile phone to school, so as to be contactable before school begins or after school finishes. In such instances, the device much be switched off while the pupil is on the school grounds, in the school building or engaged in a school-related activity off campus.

1. **Pupil Use of Smartphones, Smartwatches & Tablet Devices at School**
2. Where a pupil brings a smartphone or digital device to school, it must be switched off at all times while the pupil is on the school grounds, in the school building, or engaged in a school-related activity on or off campus. Where a pupil brings a smartphone or digital device to school, the school accepts no responsibility for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices.
3. Pupil smartphones are not permitted on school tours and outings. Should contact with a parent/guardian be necessary, the supervising teacher will have all relevant contact details for each pupil and will ensure that contact is made, where required.
4. On certain occasions during the school year, e.g. Technology Hour/Day, pupils may be permitted to bring their own technological devices to school to support their learning. The pupils will adhere to the specific operating guidelines communicated by their class teacher or designated teacher.
5. Pupil smartphones or digital devices may never be used at school to:
* Make phonecalls or to text
* Photograph or video/voice record themselves or other pupils or staff
* Play games or music
* Access social media
* Browse the internet.

Each of the above actions constitutes a misuse of a technological device at school. This list is not exhaustive.

The only exception to the above is where a technological device is used with the express permission of the class teacher or designated teacher as per point 3 above.

1. **Sanctions for Pupil Misuse of Smartphones, Smartwatches & Tablet Devices at School**
	1. **Minor Misuse of Technological Device**

Where a pupil is found to have misused a technological device (see Point 4 above) at school or while engaged in a school-related activity off campus, the device will be confiscated by the class teacher or designated teacher. Where the misuse is minor, e.g. not having the device switched off before entering the school grounds, the device will be returned to the pupil at the end of the school day. The parent/guardian will be informed in writing of the nature of the misuse, the sanction imposed and any future action that will be taken by Scoil Mhuire should a further misuse occur (Appendix 1).

* 1. **Serious Misuse of Technological Device**

Where the misuse of a technological device is deemed to be more serious, e.g. the recording of pupil or staff images in any form, the device will be confiscated by the class teacher or designated teacher and retained by the Principal or Deputy Principal for a period of up to **five school days**. The Principal or Deputy Principal will convene a meeting with the parent/guardian and pupil to outline the nature of the misuse and the sanction imposed. The parent/guardian will also be provided with a written statement on the matter.

* 1. **Use of a Technological Device to Engage in Cyberbullying**

Where a pupil is found to have misused a technological device at school or while engaged in a school-related activity off campus to cyberbully another pupil or a member of staff, or send offensive messages or calls, the device will be confiscated by the class teacher or designated teacher and retained by the Principal or Deputy Principal for a period of up to **ten school days**. The Principal or Deputy Principal will convene a meeting with the parent/guardian and pupil to outline the nature of the misuse and the sanction imposed. The parent/guardian will also be provided with a written statement on the matter. All instances of cyberbullying will be investigated and dealt with under Scoil Mhuire’s Anti-Bullying Policy.

* 1. **Repeated Misuse of a Technological Device**

Where a pupil is involved in the misuse of a technological device on a second occasion, the device will be confiscated by the class teacher or designated teacher and retained by the Principal or Deputy Principal for a period of up to **ten school days**. The Principal or Deputy Principal will convene a meeting with the parent/guardian and pupil to outline the nature of the misuse and the sanction imposed. The parent/guardian will also be provided with a written statement on the matter. Where a pupil is involved repeatedly in the misuse of a technological device, Scoil Mhuire reserves the right to withdraw the privilege from that pupil of bringing any technological device to school.

1. **Staff Use of Personal Mobile Phones or Other Technological Devices at School**

Scoil Mhuire staff members are permitted to have their personal mobile phones with them at all times.

The following protocols apply to the use of personal mobile phones by staff members during school time and for school purposes:

1. The mobile phone must be password protected, and preferably encrypted.
2. The use of mobile phones is limited to classroom teaching, learning and care requirements:
* Completing daily pupil attendance and recording pupils arriving late/departing early
* Accessing urgent pupil information on Aladdin (school administrative software)
* Accessing immediate assistance to meet the needs of individual pupils
* Adding points earned by pupils to Class Dojo
* Accessing brief educational information online
* Accessing school-related texts and emails.
1. Where written parent/guardian consent for photography/videography has been received, staff members may use their personal mobile phones to photograph or video record pupils during school related activities and events for the following purposes:
	* Contributing to an assessment record for an individual pupil or group of pupils
	* The creation of a classroom display or a display in the school environment
	* Posting a blog on the school website or school Facebook Page
	* Adding to the school Twitter feed
	* For inclusion in the School Newsletter
	* For inclusion in a newspaper article, either local or national print media.

Staff members must delete all photographic images/videos from their personal mobile phones within a 48 hour period. Any such images and videos will be uploaded to Scoil Mhuire’s approved storage system which operates in compliance with Scoil Mhuire’s Data Protection Policy, the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

1. If a staff member needs to make telephone contact with a parent/guardian, a school landline telephone should be used. In exceptional circumstances, and with the agreement of the staff member and parent/guardian, contact may take place between a teacher and a parent/guardian using the teacher’s personal mobile phone. In such circumstances, communication is restricted to urgent school related matters only.
2. Contact between a staff member and a pupil (excluding family relationships), via personal mobile phone or any technological device or technological application, is strictly prohibited and will be addressed as a gross professional misconduct.
3. Staff should never send to, or accept from, colleagues or parents/guardians, text messages or photographic images/videos that could be construed as inappropriate in any way.
4. The use of personal mobile phones by staff members should be discreet and appropriate. Engagement in personal calls and/or the use of the internet or social media for personal reasons must be confined to the staff member’s break time and take place out of sight of pupils and without intrusion on the recreation time of fellow staff members.
5. **Use of Personal Mobile Phones or Other Technological Devices by Parents/Guardians & School Visitors, School Volunteers, and Third Level & Transition Year Students on Placement**

Parents/guardians and school visitors are requested not to use their mobile phones in the presence of pupils anywhere on the school premises.

School volunteers and third level and transition year students on placement in Scoil Mhuire are not permitted to use their personal mobile phones or other technological devices to photograph or video record pupils in the school building, on the school grounds, or while engaged in a school-related activity on or off campus, including school trips and outings. They are also not permitted to use any personal technological device to communicate with a pupil in any way and to do so would result in the immediate termination of their involvement in Scoil Mhuire, including the reporting of the matter to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána, if deemed appropriate by school management. The use of personal mobile phones by school volunteers and third level and transition year students on placement to engage in personal calls and/or the use of the internet or social media is strictly confined to the person’s break time and must take place out of sight of pupils and without intrusion on the recreation time of staff members and fellow volunteers/students.

While parents/guardians are permitted to take photographs and videos of their child at specific school events, e.g. class assembly, parents/guardians are reminded that they are the Data Controller for such imagery and as such:

1. They should have the express permission of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the other pupil(s) included in the image or recording.
2. The image or recording should be recorded for personal use only and should not be uploaded to and/or shared on any form of social media.
3. **Policies to be Considered in Conjunction with this Policy**
* Child Safeguarding Statement
* Code of Behaviour
* Anti-Bullying Policy
* Digital Learning Plan
* Internet Acceptable Usage Policy
* Data Protection Policy
* Communications Policy
* Supervision Policy
* School Tours & Outings Policy
* Safety, Health & Welfare Policy
1. **Ratification & Communication**

This policy was considered and ratified by the Board of Management on 28 April 2020, following consultation with staff, pupils and parents/guardians. The policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Association. A copy of the policy will be made available to the Patron and the Department of Education & Skills if requested.

1. **Monitoring & Evaluation**

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Principal, staff and Board of Management. It will be reviewed and evaluated at appropriate intervals, including through formal and informal feedback from parents/guardians, pupils, staff and others. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation.

Monsignor Dennis Lennon Dr Mags Jordan

Chairperson of Board of Management Principal/Secretary to Board of Management

28 April 2020 28 April 2020

**Appendix 1**

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**Misuse of Technological Device, including Smartphones, at School**

**I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, understand that Scoil Mhuire has a clear policy on the use by pupils of technological devices at school, including smartphones.**

**I accept that I have misused \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at school by:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Misuse of Technological Device** |  |
| 1. Not having my device switched off on the school grounds, in the school building, or while engaged in a school-related activity on or off campus.
 |  |
| 1. Making a phonecall
 |  |
| 1. Texting
 |  |
| 1. Photographing or video/voice recording myself
 |  |
| 1. Photographing or video/voice recording another pupil(s)
 |  |
| 1. Photographing or video/voice recording a member of staff
 |  |
| 1. Playing games or music
 |  |
| 1. Accessing social media
 |  |
| 1. Browsing the internet
 |  |
| 1. Other (Please specify)
 |  |

**I accept that the consequence for this misuse is the confiscation of my technological device/smartphone for \_\_\_\_\_ school days. I understand that a repeated misuse may lead to a confiscation of the technological device/smartphone for a period of up to 10 school days and/or the withdrawal of the privilege of bringing any technological device to school.**

**Going forward, I undertake to co-operate fully with Scoil Mhuire’s policy on the use of technological devices at school, including smartphones. I also commit to the safe and appropriate use of such devices at school.**

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**Signature of Pupil Signature of Principal/Deputy Principal Date**