

Scoil Mhuire, Coolcotts, Wexford

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Smartphone & 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 (this refers to any type of phone device) 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 0044/2025, *Banning the use of and access to personal mobile phones by pupils during the school day and Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools June (2024)*. According to this Circular 0044/2025 schools are required to implement a policy to ban the use of and access to, personal mobile phones by pupils in all recognised schools for the duration of the school day. Scoil Mhuire includes smartwatches in this ban. Pupils are not permitted to wear Smartwatches during school hours and/or on the school premises.

The ban on the use of phones does not apply to travel to and from school, or once afterschool activities have concluded.

2. Rationale

Scoil Mhuire in line with Circular 0044/2025 bans the use of and access to, personal mobile phones by pupils for the duration of the school day.

Schools play a vital role in promoting wellbeing and mental health by equipping children and young people with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to deal with the challenges that may impact on their wellbeing. It is recognised that technology is ever evolving and increasingly part of everyday life. The department recognises the need to build digital competence and an effective digital education ecosystem, so as to develop competent, critically engaged and active learners. This need to support children to reach their potential and participate fully as global citizens in a digital world is central to department policy. This is provided for through the curriculum at all levels, the Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027, the STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026, and the Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy. Online safety and the safe and ethical use of the internet by children and young people is a key component of the digital strategy.

Excessive mobile phone use, and screen time generally, can have a detrimental impact on pupils' concentration and academic performance. Ensuring that pupils are not using their

mobile phone for personal use during the school day can help to address these issues and foster an environment conducive to learning, as well as supporting in-person engagement with peers.

The policy to ban the use of phones by pupils during the school day, outside of limited exceptions, will enable schools to provide a phone-free environment, to support pupils' wellbeing, concentration, academic performance, and development. It will provide a space for children to disconnect from their online world and can assist in supporting them to become less dependent on their mobile phones.

Research including the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report "Technology in Education a tool on whose terms", and the Norwegian Screen Use Committee Report which examines the impact of the use of mobile phones during the school day on wellbeing and academic performance, will continue to inform Department policy and resources in this area.

3. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To establish clear and robust acceptable use guidelines for the use of digital technologies (i.e. tablets devices, ipads, chromebooks) for teaching, learning and assessment which is mediated by the teacher.
- 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.
- To support schools in improving the learning environment in schools by reducing distraction.
- To support schools in reducing the risk of cyberbullying and access to inappropriate content during school hours.
- To minimise occurrences of cyberbullying through the implementation of education programmes and monitoring mechanisms.
- To support schools increasing traditional social interactions between pupils at school break times.

4. 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 (smartwatch) 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 must be switched off while the pupil is on the school grounds, in the school building or engaged in a school-related activity off campus.

Exemptions should only apply for medical, wellbeing or specific practical reasons, or for reasons related to pupils' special educational needs. The exemptions should allow pupils to access their phones for the specific reason outlined in the exemption, and not for general use.

The examples below are not exhaustive and consideration will be needed on a case-by-case basis.

Examples of some of the possible issues where exemptions are justified may include but are not limited to:

- Diabetes blood glucose monitor and/or insulin delivery mechanism.
- Blood pressure monitoring.
- Seizure conditions where monitoring via a mobile phone app is needed.
- Additional/special educational needs, for specific tasks relating to a pupil's visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech and language impairments.
- Access by an English as a Second Language (EAL) pupil to specific applications to support language.

5. Pupil Use of Smartphones, Smartwatches & Tablet Devices at School

1. 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. Pupils are not permitted to wear Smartwatches during school hours and/or on the school premises. 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.
2. 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. Pupils are not permitted to wear smartwatches during school hours, on the school premises or on school tours/outings and/or any school related events.
3. Pupil smartphones or digital devices may never be used at school to:
 - a. Make phone calls or to text
 - b. Photograph or video/voice record themselves or other pupils or staff
 - c. Play games or music
 - d. Access social media
 - e. Browse the internet.

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

6. Sanctions for Pupil Misuse of Smartphones & Devices at School

6.1 Minor Misuse of Technological Device

Where a pupil is found to have misused a technological device (see Point 4–3 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 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 2). Smartwatches will be confiscated and parents/guardians will be able to collect the device from the school office. Pupils are not permitted to wear smartwatches during school hours, on the school premises or on school tours/outings and/or any school related events.

6.2 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. Smartwatches will be confiscated and parents/guardians will be able to collect the device from the school office. Pupils are not permitted to wear smartwatches during school hours, on the school premises or on school tours/outings and/or any school related events.

6.3 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 Bí Cineálta Procedures.

6.4 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. Smartwatches will be confiscated and parents/guardians will be able to collect the device from the school office. Pupils are not permitted to wear smartwatches during school hours, on the school premises or on school tours/outings and/or any school related events.

7. 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. Teachers are expected to use the phones for school related purposes only.

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.
3. 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
 - 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).

4. 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. Dojo is the form of daily communication with parents.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.*

8. 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.

9. Policies to be Considered in Conjunction with this Policy

- [W Child Safeguarding Statement 2025-2026.docx](#)
- [W Safety, Health & Welfare Policy.docx](#)
- [W Bí Cineálta Draft Policy Review 2025.docx](#)
- [W Code of Behaviour Review 2025.docx](#)
- [W Communications Policy 2025 Review.docx](#)
- [W Internet Acceptable Usage Policy.docx](#)
- [W Supervision Policy](#)
- [W Scoil Mhuire School Tours\Outings Policy](#)
- [W School Attendance Strategy.docx](#)
- [W Data Protection Policy 2025.docx](#)
- [W SMC Digital Learning Plan 2025 -2028.docx](#)

10. 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.

11. Monitoring & Evaluation

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Principal, staff and Board of Management. It was reviewed on 29 September 2025. It will be 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.

Breda Meagher
Chairperson of Board of Management
29 September 2025

Karina McKiernan
Principal/Secretary to Board of Management
29 September 2025

Appendix 1

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Smartphone, Smartwatch & Tablet Device Policy

Pupil Pledge:

1. I, _____, understand that Scoil Mhuire has a clear policy on the use by pupils of technological devices at school.
2. Smartphones (any phone device/capability) and smartwatches are banned at school.
3. Phones must be switched off before entry to school grounds and phones may be switched once off school grounds.
4. I am not permitted to wear smartwatches during school hours, on the school premises or on school tours/outings and/or any school related events.
5. The ban on the use of phones does not apply to travel to and from school, or once afterschool activities have concluded.

Parent/Guardian Pledge:

1. I, _____, the parent/guardian of _____ understand that Scoil Mhuire has a clear policy on the use by pupils of technological devices at school.
2. Smartphones (any phone device/capability) and smartwatches are banned at school.
3. Phones must be switched off before entry to school grounds and phones may be switched once off school grounds.
4. I am not permitted to wear smartwatches during school hours, on the school premises or on school tours/outings and/or any school related events.
5. The ban on the use of phones does not apply to travel to and from school, or once afterschool activities have concluded.

Appendix 2

Misuse of Technological Device, including Smartphones/Smartwatches/Mobile phones, at School



I, _____, understand that Scoil Mhuire has a clear policy on the use by pupils of technological devices at school **and smartphones/smartwatches/mobile phones are banned at school** The ban on the use of phones does not apply to travel to and from school, or once afterschool activities have concluded. Phones must be switched off before entry to school grounds and phones may be switched once off school grounds.

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.	
2. Making a phonecall	
3. Texting	
4. Photographing or video/voice recording myself	
5. Photographing or video/voice recording another pupil(s)	
6. Photographing or video/voice recording a member of staff	
7. Playing games or music	
8. Accessing social media	
9. Browsing the internet	
10. 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 the ban of using smartphones on the school grounds. I also commit to the safe and appropriate use of such devices at school.

Signature of Pupil

Signature of Principal/Deputy Principal

Date

Appendix 3

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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. **Teachers are expected to use the phones for school related purposes only.**

I, _____ acknowledge 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.
3. Where written parent/guardian consent for photography/videography has been received, I may use my personal mobile phone 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
 - For inclusion in the School Newsletter
 - For inclusion in a newspaper article, either local or national print media.

I must delete all photographic images/videos from my personal mobile phone 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).

4. If I need 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.
Dojo is the form of daily communication with parents.

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.*

Dated:

Office Use: