



Coláiste Pobail Acla

Mobile Phone and Digital Devices Policy

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Contents

1. Background

1.1. Rationale

1.2. Link with the School's Mission Statement

2. Procedures

2.1. On School Grounds

2.2. In Class

2.3. Out of School Activities

2.4. Student Contact with Home

2.5. Breaches of the Mobile Phone & Digital Device Policy

3. Responsibility

4. Evaluation

5. Related Linked School Policies

6. Declaration

1. Background

This policy was drawn up in response to technological advances, which have seen a significant increase in mobile phone usage and other digital devices amongst the school population in recent years.

1.1. Rationale

The use of mobile phones and digital devices, particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated technology, may present some challenges in our school and needs to be carefully managed by school procedures in order to create and maintain a safe school environment.

- Mobile phones and other digital devices can be intrusive and distracting in a school environment. This policy refers to both mobile phones and all other digital devices that can be used as recording and/or communication devices.
- The possibility of theft and the resultant loss of time in dealing with the matter is an unacceptable deployment of school resources.
- The use of such equipment poses a threat to our ability to ensure our students are cared for in a safe and protected environment.
- Such equipment may be used to harass or bully other members of the school community.
- Such equipment may be used to take or transmit inappropriate/unlawful images.
- Phones and other digital devices may be used to access inappropriate material.

We at Coláiste Pobail Acla are aware that some parents/guardians may feel the need for their children to carry mobile phones or digital devices for personal safety and protection while travelling to and from school.

In this regard, mobile phones and other digital devices are not banned by the school. However, ***their use in the school building, on the school grounds or while on school activities is banned.***

There may be occasions where class teachers deem the use of mobile phones and other digital devices useful tools for academic work. In such instances, with the approval of the principal and advance notice given, phones may be permitted to be used in class under the close supervision of teachers.

1.2. Link with the School's Mission Statement

Coláiste Pobail Acla aims to maintain a supportive school environment that is safe and secure for all school community members as set out in the school Mission Statement.

2. Procedures

2.1. On School Grounds

The school recommends that phones and other digital devices are not brought to school unless advance notice is given to students by teachers where these such devices may be beneficial for coursework and enhance learning.

As such, the school will accept no responsibility for replacing mobile phones that are lost, stolen or damaged.

A parent/guardian who feels their child needs a phone while travelling to and from school must adhere to the procedures outlined in this policy. On entering the school grounds, mobile phones must be turned off and put 'out of sight'.

Students are not allowed to use mobile phones or other digital devices while on the school premises. This includes the use of such equipment for phoning, messaging, filming, recording audio, taking photographs, instant messaging, playing music, checking the time/date, using alarms. This list is not exhaustive; in short, no usage of such devices is permitted. If they are seen in our school or on our grounds it is deemed to be a breach of the policy.

2.2. In Class

Students may be asked by their class teacher to bring a device to that class. Student's must follow instructions and abide by school policies and procedures during these classes. These devices must not be used or 'in sight' at any other time, as outlined in this policy.

2.3. Out of School Activities

Students travelling away from school on an organised school activity **may** be permitted to use their phone in certain circumstances.

On such occasions, where a teacher is permitting phone usage, students and parents/guardians will be made aware of it in advance of travel in writing.

Unless this notification is received, parents/guardians and students must adhere to the usual phone and digital devices policy as outlined in this document.

2.4. Student Contact with Home

If a student needs to contact home during the day, this contact **must** be made through the school office using the school landline phone. We are happy to absorb the cost of these phone calls.

It is unacceptable for students to contact home using a device that is banned from use on our premises.

Likewise, parents/guardians who need to contact their children during the school day are welcome to do so by ringing the school at 098-45139. It is important that the ban on mobile phone usage is supported by our whole school community including parents/guardians.

2.5. Breaches of the Mobile Phone & Digital Device Policy

Any mobile phone seen in the use of a student on school grounds will be confiscated immediately by a member of staff. Students are not permitted to remove sim cards or interfere with phones beyond turning them off before handing them over.

Confiscated phones will be placed in an envelope, sealed and kept in the office in locked storage overnight. On the first confiscation, parents/guardians may collect the phone at the end of the next school day from the office. The parent/guardian who collects the phone must sign for it. Further breaches will result in sanctions being imposed by school management.

Failure to hand up a mobile phone to a member of staff when requested will result in an escalation of sanctions under our Code of Behaviour including an evening detention and may result in further sanctions at the discretion of school management.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. Students with mobile phones must not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person via SMS messages/chat rooms/social network sites, taking/sending/uploading photos or phone calls. Circulating objectionable images, videos and other forms of data will also be treated as a serious disciplinary issue. In certain circumstances, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí. In such cases, parents/guardians will be informed.

3. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of Students, Staff and Parents/Guardians to adhere to this policy.

4. Evaluation

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis and amendments added as new technology develops and becomes accessible.

5. Related Linked School Policies

- Code of Behaviour
- ICT and Acceptable Use
- Out of School Activities

6. Declaration

Mobile Phone and Digital Devices Policy

This Coláiste Pobail Acla Policy was formed following consultation with all staff, members of the Board of Management, Parents and the Student Council. It is recommended that this policy be reviewed every three years or whenever it is deemed necessary by School Management. The Board of Management of Coláiste Pobail Acla adopted it on:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Mr. Pat Kilbane

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Mr. Paul Fahy

Board Secretary & School Principal (Acting)