

# **MOBILE PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES: ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (students)**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Christ is our teacher.

At St Bernard's we believe that all persons are created by God, unique and equal. We strive to create a caring Christian community in which we provide education based on Gospel values where all people reach their full potential. We aim to develop positive relationships with every individual and family, the parishes and the wider community.

**"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full"  
John 10:10**

<b>Reviewed by:</b>	K Crawford (Acting Principal), June 2024
<b>Reviewed at:</b>	
<b>Approved by:</b>	Austin Senior, Chair of Governors, July 2024
<b>Signed:</b>	Austin Senior, Chair of Governors

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The widespread ownership of mobile phones/electronic devices among young people requires that teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones/electronic devices are used responsibly at school. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones /electronic devices can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones/electronic devices provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.
- 1.2** St Bernard's Catholic High School has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones/electronic devices that provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones/electronic devices during school hours.
- 1.3** Students, their parents or carers must read the Acceptable Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones/electronic devices to school.
- 1.4** The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones/electronic devices also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities both on the school campus and off-site.

## **2. Rationale**

- 2.1** The school recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.
- 2.2** Personal safety and security  
Our School accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones/electronic devices to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.
- 2.3** The school reserves the right to limit or ban the use of possession of mobile phones in school for individuals, groups or full cohorts of students, either in response to concerns about their use or to support specific activities in school.

## **3. Responsibility**

- 3.1** It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones/electronic devices to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- 3.2** The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of the phone/device and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.
- 3.3** Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone/electronic device to school. It is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the

event of loss or damage. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.

- 3.4 Students are responsible for keeping the school informed of their current mobile/electronic device phone details to aid return if lost on the school campus.
- 3.5 Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, Reception remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

#### **4. Acceptable Uses**

- 4.1 The school recognises the importance of emerging technologies present in modern mobile phones/electronic devices e.g. camera and video recording, internet access, MP3 and MP4 playback, blogging etc. In the future teachers may wish to utilise these functions to aid teaching and learning and students may have the opportunity to use their mobile phones/electronic devices in the classroom. On these occasions students may use their mobile phones/electronic devices in the classroom when express permission has been given by the teacher. The use of personal mobile phones/electronic devices in one lesson for a specific purpose does not mean blanket usage is then acceptable.
- 4.2 In all other cases, mobile phones/electronic devices should be switched off in lessons and kept out of sight at all times. Parents/carers are requested that in cases of emergency they contact the school first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements.
- 4.3 Mobile phones/electronic devices should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school (see section 5).
- 4.4 Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.

#### **5. Unacceptable Uses**

- 5.1 Unless express permission is granted by the member of staff, mobile phones/electronic devices should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during school lessons and other educational activities, such as assemblies.
- 5.2 The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone/electronic devices must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones/electronic devices.
- 5.3 Mobile phones/electronic devices must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping. They should be turned off during lesson times unless the teacher allows their use for learning purposes.

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- 5.4** Using mobile phones/electronic devices to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.
- 5.5** It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones/electronic devices to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones/electronic devices to photograph or film any student or member of staff without their consent. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images and further actions may be sanctioned. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.
- 5.6** Mobile phones/electronic devices are not to be used or taken into changing rooms or toilets for use in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.
- 5.7** Should there be a repeat of any disruption to lessons caused by a mobile phone/electronic device, the responsible student may face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Headteacher. This may include a mobile phone/electronic devices ban in school.

## **6. Theft or damage**

- 6.1** Students who bring a mobile phone/electronic devices to school should keep it securely on their person. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile phones/electronic devices are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.
- 6.2** Mobile phones/electronic devices that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to Reception.
- 6.3** The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/electronic devices.
- 6.4** The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones/electronic devices stolen while travelling to and from school.
- 6.5** It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones/electronic devices and/or passwords should not be shared.

## **7. Inappropriate conduct**

- 7.1** Mobile phones/electronic devices are banned from all examinations. Students are expected to hand phones to invigilators before entering the exam hall. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.

- 7.2** Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action.
- 7.3** Students with mobile phones/electronic devices may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile phones/electronic devices to bully other students will face disciplinary action. *[It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.]*
- 7.4** Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence.

## **8. Sanctions**

- 8.1** Students who infringe the rules set out in this document may face having their phones/electronic devices confiscated by a member of staff. If the phone/electronic device is being used inappropriately the student must give it to a member of staff if requested. They will take the device to be stored at Reception. Infringements will be recorded on the school's behaviour system.
- 8.2** On infringement of this policy the mobile phone/electronic devices would be confiscated by the member of staff and taken to a secure place within the school office. The student will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day and a record will be made of the incident.
- 8.3** Further infringements may result in the mobile phone being confiscated by the member of staff and taken to a secure place within the school office. Parents will be notified and the pupil may not be permitted to collect the phone/electronic device without a parent/carer's consent. If a parent/carer is unable to attend the school they are permitted to phone and give verbal consent for their child to collect the phone/electronic device and must speak to the appropriate Pastoral Leader. The incident will be recorded on the school's behaviour system.
- 8.4** This may also result in a ban on bringing a mobile phone/electronic device to school.
- 8.5** As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident – of a serious nature - being referred to the police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.