

ARDSCOIL MHUIRE



Mobile phone / Electronic Device Policy

Relationship to Mission Statement

“In this school we aim to provide a Christian environment where each person is valued and assisted to reach their full potential”.

Ardscoil Mhuire is an all-girls voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST.

Ardscoil Mhuire aims to provide a Catholic environment where all persons are respected and assisted to reach their full potential. The school aims to provide a holistic education for all our students, in line with the spirit and ethos of the Mercy tradition.

Ardscoil Mhuire’s Policy on the use of mobile phones, iphones, ipads, ipods or other such devices by pupils in school has been put in place with due regard to the School Ethos and Mission Statement and current legislation (including child protection and data protection).

The use of mobile phones, iPhones, iPads, iPods or other such devices, with the exception of a Kindle **, by students (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems for schools. The Board of Management of Ardscoil Mhuire recognises and acknowledges the positive aspects of students’ use of mobile phones and other electronic recording/ communication devices. However, there are potential dangers for the school community stemming from the misuse and abuse of electronic media. While Ardscoil Mhuire accepts that it is a student’s right to have a mobile phone, the following policy aims to maintain a safe, nurturing environment where the personal dignity and rights of all members of the school community are preserved.

**A Kindle, or similar electronic reading device, is permitted if it has been documented and sanctioned by the school that a student needs such a device to access the curriculum. The device should not be connected to WiFi and any books, updates, etc. should be downloaded prior to the device being brought to school

The Rationale for this Policy

Ardscoil Mhuire aims to create an orderly environment so that effective teaching and learning can take place. Mobile phones and other electronic devices can disturb this environment and violate the rights of other members of the school community.

The following concerns have been considered in the preparation of this policy:-

1. Mobile phones are valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft.
2. Mobile phones, iPhones, iPads, iPods, Smart watches/technology, such as iWatches or other such devices (and their cost and level of sophistication – or otherwise) can make pupils the object of envy or disparagement and can have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying.
3. Even when apparently silent, the use of mobile phones, iPhones, iPads, iPods or other such devices for texting purposes can undermine classroom discipline.
4. Use of phones with integrated cameras, iPhones, iPads, iPods or other such devices can lead to bullying within the school community and issues of child protection and data protection with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.

The Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide students and parents with information regarding our mobile phone / electronic device policy. This policy was developed in partnership with all stakeholders of the Ardscoil Mhuire school community and will be presented to and reviewed as appropriate by the school's Board of Management.

Any queries arising from the Mobile Phone / Electronic Device Policy may be addressed to the Principal of the School (Bríd Herbert), or the Chairperson of the Board of Management (Sr. Ena Quinlan, Ardscoil Mhuire, Corbally, Limerick).

The Aims of this Policy

1. To support the school ethos and mission statement.
2. To ensure that teaching and learning can proceed without interruption.
3. To maintain an environment that respects all members of the school community.
4. To assist in the prevention of bullying via mobile phone and electronic devices.
5. To protect all members of the school community from uninvited attention via mobile phone/internet, camera or video technology.
6. To maintain and promote the school Code of Behaviour and school policies.

In order to assist the school in implementing this policy, parents/guardians are asked not to contact students by mobile phone at any time during the school day. Contact with the school may be made through the office at (061)349014 and students are directed to use the office phone in emergencies. A student, who wishes to go home for any reason during the school day, must arrange to do so through the school office and not independently by mobile phone.

This ensures that correct procedures for leaving school before the ending of classes for that day are observed. Responsibility cannot be taken by the school authorities for students who arrange independently to go home without following proper procedure. Any such arrangement is a breach of the Code of Behaviour for students and will incur sanctions.

Policy Statement

1. Ardscoil Mhuire prohibits the use by pupils of mobile phones, iPhones, iPads, iPods, Smart watches/technology, such as iWatches or other such devices when on the school premises, grounds or off site activities e.g. school swimming or sport activities.

Ardscoil Mhuire advises all parents, guardians or carers to discourage pupils from bringing mobile phones, iPhones, iPads, iPods or other such devices to school.

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, they do so at their own risk.

If students **do** bring a mobile phone to school, the phone **must be switched off**** on arrival and for the duration of the school day. Phones which are turned on and discovered on the school premises or school activity will be confiscated (NOT SEEN, NOT HEARD, NOT TAKEN)

Switched off does not mean 'Silent', 'Airplane Mode', 'Meeting' or any similar mode. The phone must be **powered off.

2. Parents/guardians wishing to contact a student while in school are asked to do so through the office.

3. Students who become unwell at school must follow the normal school procedures and make contact with home through the office.

4. Where it has become known that a school pupil has used a mobile phone / electronic device without permission for any purpose or if said device is activated in a student's possession or while in her bag or locker the following procedures will be followed:

a. On the first occasion, the equipment including the SIM card will be confiscated from the pupil. Items may be collected by parents/guardians only, after school at 3.40pm on Monday and Tuesday and 3.00pm on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

b. On the second occasion in that school year, the equipment including sim card will be confiscated from the pupil. Items may be collected by parents/guardians only, after school at 3.40pm on Monday and Tuesday and 3.00pm on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The student will also receive a two hour detention after school on the day following the incident.

c. Any further breach of the School Code of Behaviour and Mobile Phone/Electronic Device Policy will result in further sanctions being imposed up to and including suspension.

5. Failure to hand over the mobile phone when requested to do so by a member of staff will result in an automatic detention after school on the day following the incident. Failure to hand over the mobile phone to the Deputy Principal or Principal will result in sanctions up to and including suspension.

6. The school reserves the right to view the contents of the phone, in the presence of the student, to ensure it contains no images or information which could compromise a member of the school community. Any such information or images will be deleted.

7. Incidents where students use mobile phones or electronic devices to bully other students or send offensive messages, images or make nuisance calls will be investigated under the relevant school policies i.e. Mobile Phone/Electronic Device Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Code of Behaviour etc.

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 Gardaí in such incidents.

8. During IN HOUSE EXAMS (Halloween, Christmas, Summer & pre) all students must place their phone and smart watch, if appropriate, in a box at the top of the classroom. The phone must be POWERED OFF at all times. This instance does not constitute a violation of the NOT SEEN, NOT HEARD, NOT TAKEN policy. This replicates the procedures for state exams and is good practice in preparation for such exams.

9. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones. The safety and security of mobile phones is wholly a matter for students/parents.

10. A statement regarding the school Mobile Phone/Electronic Device Policy is included in the school journal.

Signed: Sr. Ena Quinlivan
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 29th May 2024