

ST MUNCHIN'S COLLEGE

POLICY ON MOBLIE PHONES

Rationale for the Policy:

- The Board recognises that Mobile Phones have become a powerful source of communication and learning. While restrictions to their use must apply in a variety of circumstances- meetings, classrooms, school grounds, school activities etc.; nonetheless, in St Munchin's College we recognise that mobile phones can enhance learning and can be used to powerful positive effect.
- The Board also acknowledges the integration of Mobile Phones into the culture of adolescents.
- Nevertheless, the misuse of Mobile Phones has a disruptive effect on classroom teaching and learning. There are also inherent dangers associated with the misuse of Camera/Picture Phones. Staff and pupils must be protected from any invasion of privacy or harassment associated with the misuse of Mobile Phones.
- In addition, the wellbeing, growth and development of our students is of paramount importance to all members of the school community.
- Social isolation is characterized by a lack of contact with other people in normal daily living, such as, the workplace, with friends and in social activities. We isolate ourselves by walking around in our own little world, staring at the screen of the latest mobile device even when we are around other people.
- The use of online social media outlets causes us to meet face-to-face with much less frequency resulting in a lack of much needed social skills. We lose the ability to read body language and social cues in other people.

Policy:

Mobile Phones are allowed at St. Munchin's College with the following conditions;

- Where students bring a Mobile Phones to school, the phone must be switched off on arrival at the College 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 CONFISCATED**)
- No photographs or recordings either video or audio can be made on a phone on the school premises or school activity without the school's permission. Using a phone in such a way can seriously infringe on people's privacy and rights.
- Incidents where students use a mobile phone to bully others by sending offensive messages or calls will be investigated under the Anti-Bullying Policy by the school. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person.
- If a pupil becomes ill, he should inform his Tutor, in the first instance, and speak with the Year Head if the Tutor is unavailable. Students are allowed to call home from Reception only, with permission from the Tutor of Year Head.
- Parents are requested not to phone students on their Mobile Phones during school hours.

Instead, we expect parents to contact the School Secretary.

- Students are asked not to phone home using their Mobile Phones unless authorised by School Management. Instead, they may call from the Office Phone.
- 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.
- It is strongly advised that students mark their Mobile Phones with their names and use passwords to ensure that unauthorised phone calls/communications cannot be made on their phones.

Sanctions:

If a teacher sees or hears a Mobile Phone (***NOT SEEN, NOT HEARD, NOT CONFISCATED***) during school hours, on the school premises or on a school activity;

- The Mobile Phone including sim card/memory card will be confiscated immediately, submitted to the school office, held for 2 school days, and will be returned upon guarantee to the school that the phone will not be misused again.
- If a second offence occurs, the Mobile Phone will be confiscated for a further 2 days and will be returned to parents only upon written guarantee from the parent/guardian to the school that the phone will not be misused again.
- Refusal to hand over a phone will be regarded as a serious breach of the school's **Code of Behaviour** and the parent / guardian will be contacted to come and take the pupil home. The student will not be re-admitted to the school until the phone has been handed over and a meeting with parents has been arranged with school management.
- The misuse of a phone – taking or sending inappropriate images, unauthorised recording of staff or pupils, transfer of images of staff or pupils is illegal. The Board will respond appropriately in such cases and will have the full range of sanctions open to them. In such cases, the phone will not be returned until the incident has been dealt with to the Board's satisfaction. The pupil will lose the privilege of having a mobile phone in school.
- The school reserves the right to view the contents of a Mobile Phone, in the presence of the student, to ensure it contains no images or information that could compromise a member of the school community. Any such information or images will be deleted.

Use of Mobile Phones by Staff:

The teaching staff are advised that Mobile Phones are not to be used in class unless expressly for school purposes or for emergency use.

Amendment: Mobile Phone Usage

- In line with COVID-19 Returning to School protocols, we have amended our mobile phone policy to align it to the increased use of ICT in education. During the lockdown, our students had access to their work through Microsoft Teams. Many students accessed this work on their phones, as opposed to using laptops, PC's or ipad's. Teachers assigned work through Teams and students submitted their work back through the same forum. Online live streaming of classes can also operate through Microsoft Teams.

We now want to ensure, particularly in the event of a future lockdown or prolonged closure that all year groups are and have become proficient at using their phones to access their work on

Teams. Therefore, students will have full permission to use their phones in class, **only when the teacher is present and instructs them to do so.** Students must follow their teacher's instructions carefully, in relation to the use of the phone. Should any student be found to be using their phone for any other purpose (texting, social media, inappropriate use of the camera facility) then confiscation of the phone will occur.

Our policy of Not Seen, Not Heard, Not Confiscated remains as normal, in all areas outside of the classroom including the school yard.

Reviewed: Sept 2020

Next Review: Sept 2022

Signed:

Chairman Board Management

Principal

Date: