



# **Mobile Phone and Personal Electronic Devices Policy**

**2023-2024**

## **1. Introduction**

John the Baptist Community School is committed to providing a safe environment where learning and teaching can take place. John the Baptist Community School's mobile phone policy is in keeping with the Mission statement:

### ***Mission Statement***

*John the Baptist Community School is committed to the provision of a broadly based education in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, balancing vision with realism which facilitates personal growth and development among students, staff and community.*

## **2. Scope of this Policy:**

This policy covers all Personal Electronic devices (P.E.D.s) which includes:

- Mobile phones/smart phones/smart watches etc.
- All electronic devices including MP3/4, personal music devices, tablets or any other device capable of recording or sending messages. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

## **3. Rationale**

In keeping with our mission statement, the following policy is founded on maintaining a safe, nurturing environment where the personal dignity and rights of the school community are preserved, and the school's reputation is safe guarded. (see Code of Behaviour Policy: 1.9 &1.10) It is important for students to develop their socialisation and communication skills with peers and over-use of mobile phones impedes this.

The school supports the use of new technology but will not tolerate any abuse of such technology. It is expected that students manage and use devices in an effective, responsible and accountable manner. The misuse of a personal electronic device could constitute a breach of safety and security for all the members of the school community. Misuse of P.E.D.s may have far reaching consequences that may go well beyond the initial action as well as having the potential to cause serious emotional, social, behavioural and even legal implications for all those involved.

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Classes and learning are not interrupted by P.E.Ds.
- Students are concentrating in class and engaged in active learning.
- Text/video bullying/intimidation/cyber bullying are prevented within the school.
- Individual privacy and personal safety are upheld in the school community.

### **Contact with Home During the School Day**

All calls to Parents/Guardians regarding students must be made from the school office or sick bay. This is to ensure that students who may be unwell or ill are fully monitored and cared for as they await collection. Parents/Guardians who need to contact students during the day must do so through the school office at (061) 383283. Please be aware that messages cannot be accessed by the student until the end of the school day as mobile phones/P.E.Ds are not to be switched on in school. We ask Parents/Guardians to cooperate and support this policy by not contacting students by mobile phone during school hours. Responsibility cannot be taken by the school authorities for students who arrange independently to leave the school premises without following proper procedure. Any such arrangement is a breach of the Code of Behaviour for Students and will incur sanctions.

### **4. Policy**

Cyber bullying is taken very seriously as no student/teacher or staff member should fear digital attacks (please see the Counter Bullying Policy). The creation or sharing of explicit text, images and/or video, including sexting which is the sharing of sexual text, video, and photographic content using mobile phones, apps, social networking services and other internet technologies is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour. It will have serious consequences and sanctions up to and including suspension and expulsion for those involved in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour. All incidents involving creating, storing, or sharing of explicit text, images and/or video of children under the age of 17 years

will be reported as an incident to the Gardaí and Tusla and the State Claims Agency (to the latter as there is the potential to cause injury/harm to the individual).

It is illegal to display or circulate messages, images or statements relating to another person that may be considered offensive or hurtful without their permission. Irresponsible use of mobile phones/P.E.Ds can lead to people's rights being violated. The potential for misuse of these phones in dressing room areas and classrooms exists and, with access to social network sites so readily available, the misuse of the phone in these circumstances could have bullying implications.

Accounts or the creating of accounts that impersonate people in a deceptive manner, identity theft or content that contains bullying, harassment, statements targeting an individual or hateful speech and behaviour will not be tolerated at John the Baptist C.S. Such breaches will result in serious consequences and may include reporting to the Gardaí and up to and including suspension or expulsion.

#### **5. If students insist on bringing a mobile phone or other electronic devices to school:**

- They must be kept in their locker/ school bag, switched off and not carried on their person. If they are found to be carrying a device, on their person, it will be confiscated for the remainder of the day. Parents/Guardians may arrange to contact students through the office.
- It is strongly advised that students mark their mobile phones/P.E.Ds with their names and use passwords to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones. Each student is responsible for all communication from their phone/ P.E.Ds and for any image or recording on their phone/P.E.Ds.
- Mobile phones and P.E.Ds are expensive, and the school cannot accept responsibility for mobile phones/P.E.Ds. Devices/P.E.Ds are brought to school entirely at the owner's risk. The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged devices.

- They must remain switched off during school-based activities. These include games, religious services, concerts, speakers, workshops, shows and all other school-based and out of school activities. The use of P.E.Ds including Smart watches during exams/assessments to access material is strictly forbidden and will incur sanctions. This is in line with State Examinations guidelines and so allows students to become familiar with such regulations.
- The Department of Education and Science does not recognise mobile phones/P.E.Ds as appropriate for use as calculators or clocks and as such, mobile phones/P.E.Ds should not be produced by students using this as a pretext.
- In accordance with GDPR legislation, audio or visual recordings are not allowed and strictly forbidden. Serious sanctions, up to and including reporting to An Garda Síochána, will apply in the event of unauthorised photographs or recordings (including those taken of any teacher, student, staff member or visitor to the school). Any comments, likes or sharing of such material will implicate a student in such actions and may have very serious consequences up to and including suspension, expulsion and possible referral to the Gardaí.
- In exceptional circumstances (e.g. school trips, out of school matches, foreign trips, out of school hours trips etc.), prior permission may be granted by school management for the use of the mobile phones/P.E.Ds on request by staff member responsible for the activity. This allows students to contact teachers or Parents/Guardians as necessary. Students participating in school related activities must abide by the relevant rules. Inappropriate use of phones/P.E.Ds during school related activities is strictly forbidden and sanctions will apply.

## **6. Sanctions:**

- a. Devices/P.E.Ds being carried by students will be confiscated and held until the end of the day or may result in the device/P.E.Ds being kept overnight if deemed necessary at

the discretion of management. The Parent/Guardian may be requested to collect the device/P.E.Ds from the school.

- b. Refusal by students to cooperate in handing over the device/P.E.Ds may result in the device being held overnight. The Parent/Guardian may be requested to collect the device/P.E.Ds from the school.
- c. The teacher will hand over the device/P.E.Ds to the Deputy Principal. The device will be placed in an envelope recording the students name, date of confiscation and the name of the teacher confiscating the device. It will be stored in a secure location.
- d. Depending on the severity of the breach the device may be collected by the student from the principal's office at the arranged time.
- e. Repeated breaches by the same student or a serious breach may result in the device being confiscated and kept for an extended period or other consequences as per section 4 above. This will allow for consultation with parents/guardians to address the incident and prevent future breaches. In this case, a parent/guardian must collect the device from the school.

#### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

##### **Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head/Class Tutor/Class Teacher**

- Monitor implementation of policy
- Implement sanctions in cases of breach of policy
- Review Policy

##### **Parents/Guardians**

- Support school policy on mobile phones/digital devices

##### **Students**

- Comply with rules on mobile phones/digital devices.

**Review**

This Policy is updated every two years or when issues arise. Reviewed by: Deputy Principal; Dearbhaile Maher, Acting Deputy Principal: Bree Anne Conheady and Assistant Principal; Liz Leahy. Parent Representative: Riah Hogan and members of the Student Council in January 2024.

**Signed:**

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**Chairperson**

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**Principal****Board of Management****Date:** \_\_\_\_\_**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_**Date of next review: 2025-2026**



## **Mobile Phone and Personal Electronic Devices Policy**

### **Reviewed by:**

- Assistant Principals
- Parent Association
- Teachers
- Student Council Members



**Ratified by the B.O.M on:** 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**Review Date:** January 2026