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Catholic School FCJ

Mobile Phone Policy (Students)	
Committee	Curriculum
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Ratified By Governing Body	13 th May 2024
Frequency of Review	2 years
Next review Date	Summer 2026

The FCJ Schools' Vision

Our vision is that FCJ schools are communities of personal and academic excellence.

Strong in companionship, the unique giftedness of every person in these faith communities is recognised, nourished and celebrated.

Our hope and expectation is that, through God's grace working in us all, each young person grows into their best self, with zest for life and the generosity and confidence to use their talents and gifts in the service of others.

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

1. Use of mobile phones by students

Policy Outline

Mobile Phones/recording devices or any other communication device are not to be used or brought into school. Mobile phones and, in particular, the new generation of smartphones include many additional functions such as an integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, mobile office applications and mobile access to the internet. These allow immediate access to email, searching for information on the internet and other functions such as access to social networking sites.

The DfE's guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology (including smart watches) that the school includes in this policy. It states that students should not use mobile phones throughout the school day. This includes during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

There has been an increase in the number of issues in school to do with online abuse via mobile phone technology and social media. As a result, students' wellbeing and mental health is being affected by this abuse of mobile phone technology. We appreciate that there is a positive side to mobile phone technology and students often carry mobile phones so that they can contact parents before and after school. Beyond this, there is no need for students to use their mobile phones in school. In the past we have allowed students to keep their phones on their person as long as they are switched off, however, the increasing number of breaches of this rule means that this is no longer practical or viable.

From June 2024. Students in Years 7-11 must hand in their mobile phone on arrival to School. Phones will be kept securely until the end of the school day. This will include trips during School hours.

Dealing with breaches

Misuse of mobile phones will be dealt with using the same principles set out in the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy, with the response being proportionate to the severity of the misuse. Students are aware that serious misuse may lead not only to the confiscation of their mobile phone, but may include the student being internally or externally excluded from school. If the offence is serious it will be reported to the Police.

If a mobile phone is found on a student during the day, the phone will be confiscated and only be returned to a parent/carer in person. Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by a member of pastoral staff. **N.B. Parental permission is not required for this.**

The action will be properly recorded in case it later becomes evidence of criminal activity. The record will include the time, who was present and what was found. This includes messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files. Where a mobile phone is confiscated, it will be stored in the safe in the main office and it will be recorded and kept securely.

Sanctions

Students and parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines, following the school's Behaviour for learning Policy.

In addition:

- students and their parents should be very clear that the school is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached.
- if a phone is confiscated, it will require a parent/carer to collect the phone from School. This may mean that a phone is kept in School overnight or over a weekend.
- students should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected.
- if a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff the ultimate sanction may be exclusion. The School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

Confiscation procedure

If a mobile phone is confiscated then:

- it will be held until a parent/carer collects the phone in person from the school; this may mean that a phone is kept in School overnight or over a weekend
- the confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log for monitoring purposes;
- in the case of repeated or serious misuse the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the school by appointment to collect the phone;
- where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose the Headmaster or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and, if necessary, seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines unless they are being preserved as evidence;
- if required, evidence of the offence or suspected offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen;
- the School will consider whether an incident should be reported to the local safeguarding board;
- the designated staff member should monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.

2 Exceptions for Special Circumstances and 6th Form Students

The school may permit certain students to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances, such as a student with diabetes who may need a phone to monitor blood-sugar levels. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, pupils or parents/carers should contact the student's Head of Year and provide evidence to support the request.

Any students who are given permission must then adhere to the School's Code of Conduct for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

Sixth-form students are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other students.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones in the 6th Form common room out of sight of younger students. Misuse of mobile phones by students in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- upskirting
- sextortion
- threats of violence or assault
- abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

3. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- not making any secret recording or filming of staff at any time (this includes having a phone switched on to relay a conversation to a third party). Anyone found doing this will be banned from meeting staff until further notice as decided by the Headmaster. During this time, all communication will be via email or letter;
- not taking pictures or recordings of students, unless it is at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child;
- using any permissible photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent;
- not using phones in lessons, or when working with students.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers;
- Take photos or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for students using their phones, as set out above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

4. Loss, theft or damage

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from school. Confiscated phones will be stored in secure, lockable cabinets for the duration of the school day.

5. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account feedback from parents/carers and students, staff, records of behaviour and

safeguarding incidents, and relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

May 2024

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct for students allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students without their consent.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
 - a. Do not use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating other students or staff via e-mail, text/messaging app or social media.
7. Do not use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
8. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you are not in school.
9. Do not use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
10. Do not use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
11. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
12. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.