



St. Mary's Secondary School

Mobile Phones & Electronic Device Policy



Mobile Phones & Electronic Device Policy

St. Mary's Secondary School recognises that mobile phones and smart devices are an integral part of young people's culture and way of life and can have considerable value when used appropriately. However, we also recognise that phones and smart devices are a distraction, interrupt communication and socialisation and add to anxiety and stress levels among students. The aim of this policy is to protect the wellbeing of all within St. Mary's Secondary School.

St. Mary's Secondary School students are entitled to learn in an environment free from outside distraction. Every student has the right to disconnect, the right to privacy and the right to learn in an environment that is free from technological distractions. In an effort to ensure this Yondr lockable phone pouches are used in our school.

This means:

- Phones are not to be used during the school day nor on school-related sporting activities.

Exceptions to the above:

- The expressed permission of the classroom teacher who may choose to use a mobile phone for educational and/or instructional purposes.
- On medical grounds where the device is essential to manage a medical condition and only with prior permission of the relevant Year Head and with medical documentation to support the need for the phone to monitor the named condition.
- In the event that a student does not have parental permission to bring their phone to school the parent must inform the Year Head in writing of this fact. Teachers will be notified of this via the student's Compass profile.

Each student is assigned a personal Yondr pouch. It is the responsibility of each student to bring their Pouch with them to school every day and keep it in good working condition. Yondr Pouches are given on loan to students and must be returned when the student ceases their education in St. Mary's Secondary School.

Students will be expected to 'pouch' their phone at the start of the school day/on entry to the school building and 'unpouch' at the end of the school day/on leaving the school building. For the purpose of this policy 'pouch' means to switch one's phone to silent/flight mode, place the phone/smartwatch inside the Yondr pouch and then lock the pouch closed by pressing the push button on the pouch. 'Unpouch' means to unlock one's Yondr pouch using one of the designated unpouching stations at the main school exits, remove the phone/smartwatch from the pouch and then lock the empty pouch to prevent damage while in transit.

Once a student arrives on school grounds, students are required to:

1. Turn off/silence or put on airplane mode their phone and/or smartwatch.
2. Place their phone and/or smartwatch inside their Pouch and fasten it closed.
3. Students will maintain possession of their phone during the school day and are expected to place their personal Pouch and their school journal on their desk during all class periods.
4. Store their pouched phones and/or smartwatch in the designated storage box/locked student locker during PE and school events.

The school accepts no responsibility for devices left unattended in bags or unlocked lockers.



If a teacher requests the use of phones during class time, the class teacher will facilitate the 'unpouching' of the phones. All phones and/or smartwatches must be placed back in the Yondr pouch under teacher supervision before the end of class. If students are requested to use their phone in class, it must be used only for educational purposes as instructed by their teacher. Students are expected to use their device in an appropriate and responsible manner.

Students attending supervised study after school must keep their phones and/or smartwatches pouches for the duration of study. Student laptops will be available to use for research/accessing Teams purposes.

No photographs or recording, either video or audio, can be made on the mobile phone or electronic device on the school premises without the school's permission. Using mobile phones or electronic devices in such a way can seriously infringe on people's privacy and rights and will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.

This policy also applies to students attending/travelling to/from off-campus school sporting events such as matches. Phones may be unpouched for health & safety purposes or for payment purposes en route or at their destination.

Students will be permitted to use their phones when travelling on other school tours.

If a student is using their mobile phone while on a school tour/activity, they must do so in an appropriate and responsible manner. Students should be mindful of other students/staff/members of the public when taking photos/videos and respect the privacy rights of others at all times.

Students are requested to actively support the school in implementing our Mobile Phone & Electronic Device Policy.

Violations of School policy on Mobile phones/Smart devices:

Students who fail to pouch their phone/smartwatch or who remove their phone/smartwatch from their Pouch without permission during the day will have their phone/smartwatch confiscated. Their parent/guardian will be contacted by text to inform them that the student's phone/smartwatch has been confiscated.

Refusal to allow confiscation of the device will be treated as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and will result in a suspension for the following school day.

- The phone/smartwatch can be collected **at the end of the school** day by a parent/guardian between:
 - 3.50pm – 5.00pm on Monday, Tuesday
 - 3.10pm – 4.30pm on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.If a parent/guardian is not available to collect the phone/smartwatch, it will be kept overnight and returned to the student on the next school day. This also applies across weekends where a phone/smartwatch is confiscated on a Friday and a parent/guardian is not available to collect the phone. The student will receive Lunchtime Detention.
- If a student has a second breach of the school policy on mobile phones/smart devices it will be viewed as a serious breach of the school policy. The student will have their phone/smartwatch confiscated and their parent/guardian will be contacted by text to inform them that the student's phone/smartwatch has been confiscated.



The phone/smartwatch can be collected **at the end of the school** day by a parent/guardian at the times outlined above. If a parent/guardian is not available to collect the phone/smartwatch, it will be kept overnight and returned to the student parent/guardian on the next working day. This also applies across weekends where a phone is confiscated on a Friday and a parent/guardian is not available to collect the phone/smartwatch.

The student will receive a 2-hour Evening Detention.

Repeated breach of this policy will be viewed as a serious breach of the school policy and will be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour up to and including suspension.

Random spot checks will be carried out to ensure compliance with this policy.

If a student is found to have a second phone/smartwatch at school or has pouched another item, this will be viewed as a serious breach of the school policy. Parents will be contacted and asked to remove their daughter from the school for the remainder of the school day or the student will be placed on in-school suspension.

Other:

- **Leaving School (before the end of the day):** If necessary to leave school before the end of the school day students should 'unpouch' their phone/smartwatch at the office in reception on their departure.
- **Damaged or Lost Pouch:** Any loss or damage to a Pouch, which renders it unusable, will result in the student purchasing a new one at a cost of €35. Students must notify the school immediately explaining what happened. If any damage is spotted at a pouch check it will be considered intentional unless the student has raised it previously.
- **Forgotten Pouch:** In the event that a student forgets their pouch, they need to speak with their Year Head in advance of 8.55am. If a spare pouch is available, it will be provided for use on that day only. Alternatively, the phone will be stored in the office until the end of the school day.
In the event that a student consistently forgets their Pouch, it is considered lost. Refer to the Lost Pouch policy above

Please note: Parents are asked to support the school in maintaining boundaries with regard to mobile phone/smartwatch usage while their children are in the care of our school community. Therefore, we respectfully request that in the event of an emergency parents make contact with their child during the school day through the school office 096-70333.

Parents are requested to actively support the school in implementing our Mobile Phone & Electronic Device Policy.

This is necessary because every student has the right to disconnect, the right to privacy and the right to learn in a happy, safe and healthy environment that is free from technological distractions.



Ratification

This Code of Behaviour Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:
25th June 2024

Signed: Fionnuala King
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: David O'Reilly
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management