# MOBILE PHONE POLICY

## MAY 2026

St. Brendan's Community School

**St. Brendan's Community School Mission Statement**

*"Our aim is to create a caring community of learning where each individual is valued as a unique human being."*

## Introduction

To ensure a healthy, engaging, and safe environment for all members of our school community, we are a mobile phone and smart watch free school for students during the school day. St. Brendan's Community School recognises these smart devices are an integral part of young people's culture and way of life and can have considerable benefits and value when used appropriately. However, we are also cognisant these smart devices can be a significant distraction, hinder communication and socialisation, and contribute to high levels of anxiety and stress among young people and adults alike.

This policy aims to protect the well-being of all within St. Brendan's Community School and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Positive Code of Behaviour
- Digital Citizenship
- Bí Cineálta

## Mobile Phone Process

- St. Brendan's Community School operates as a mobile phone and smart watch-free zone for students throughout each school day, including arrival, breaks and lunchtime.
- This policy applies to all school activities, whether on or off campus. During off-campus activities, pouches may only be unlocked with the permission of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Students who use digital payments for lunch during the school day must ensure they have a physical card, as their phones will not be accessible during lunchtime.
- Every student will receive a mobile phone pouch, which they will keep for the school year. This mobile phone pouch will be marked with a unique identifier code, and a record of each student's code will be maintained.
- Please note students can only bring **one mobile phone** to school.
- Should a student choose to bring a phone or smart watch to school, they must be switched off and placed in their mobile phone pouch before the student enters the school building and kept there for the day. Their mobile phone pouch is to be kept with them for the school day. Mobile Phone pouches will not be opened for those students who go home for lunch.
- Students should be aware that regular spot checks will take place, including physical checks to ensure pouches are securely locked.

- Any student found in breach of the mobile phone policy will be required to voluntarily surrender their smart device. The procedures for addressing such breaches are outlined below.
- At the end of the school day, students will unlock their pouches using the unlocking stations provided around the school.
- If a student needs to leave school early, following the correct procedures, they will release their smart device from its mobile phone pouch at the Main Office as they sign out.
- Permission to sign out and leave the school building must be agreed upon by the relevant Year Head or Deputy Principal(s) or Principal and the parent/guardian via phone call from the school.
- Parents/guardians of students with medical needs requiring access to their phones must contact the Deputy Principal(s) or Principal regarding this matter.
- Mobile phones may be used at the discretion of the teacher/staff for educational purposes, for teaching and learning.

## Breach of the Mobile Phone Policy

- Any student found with a mobile phone or smart watch outside of their designated pouch, or using it without authorisation during school hours, will be required to voluntarily surrender the device.
- Students who refuse to surrender their phone when requested by any staff member may face sanctions, up to and including suspension(s). A meeting must occur with either the Deputy Principal(s)/Principal and the parent/guardian of the student involved prior to the student returning to school.
- Smart devices will be placed in the relevant phone box in the Main Office and parents/guardians will be contacted.
- Smart devices will only be returned to parents/guardians after the end of the school day.
- Smart devices will only be available for collection by parents up to **one hour** after the final period of the school day.
- If a smart device cannot be collected as outlined above, the parent/guardian must make arrangements with the Deputy Principal/Principal for a time to collect the smart device the following day.
- Smart devices will not be returned to students.
- Students who forget their pouch more than once will be assigned a Friday detention. The office will notify the relevant Deputy Principal, who will place the student on detention.
- Failure to close a pouch correctly will result in a Friday detention, in line with the sanctions outlined below.
- Repeated breaches of this policy may lead to sanctions up to and including suspension(s).
    - Sanctions include;

- 1st offence: The student's smart device will be collected by a parent/guardian at the end of the school day, and the student will be required to attend an after-school detention on Friday.
- 2nd offence; Smart device will be collected by parent/guardian, followed by a Friday detention and a meeting with the year head/deputy principal.
- 3rd offence; Smart device will be collected by parent/guardian, followed by a meeting with the principal and a suspension.
- Continuous offences will result in long-term suspensions and/or including expulsion.

- Students in breach of this policy by bringing multiple Smart devices into school may face sanctions up to and including suspension(s).
- Students who claim not to have brought a smart device to school but are subsequently found in possession of one may face sanctions, up to and including suspension(s).

## Forgotten / Damaged Pouches

- The mobile phone pouch is the property of St. Brendan's Community School.
- If the mobile phone pouch is lost or damaged and rendered unusable, the student will be responsible for funding a replacement for €20.
- If students forget their mobile phone pouch, they must leave their phone/smart device in the phone box in the Main Office at the start of the school day.
- Any student who purposely interferes with or damages their mobile phone pouch or the mobile phone pouch of any other student may face sanctions up to and including suspension.
- Students must return the mobile phone pouch they were assigned at the end of the school year.
- Students failing to return their pouch at the end of the school year will be required to pay for a replacement.

## Supporting Healthy Mobile Phone Use Beyond the School Day

St. Brendan's Community School acknowledges that promoting responsible smart device use must extend beyond the school environment. We recognise that excessive smart device use, particularly at night, can contribute to increased anxiety, disrupted sleep and in turn, reduced school attendance and engagement. To address these concerns, the school has developed Mindful Smart Device Use Strategies to support parents in managing students screen time at home. These strategies include practical guidance and signposting to relevant external supports such as Parentline and the ISPCC. School based strategies include our SPHE and Digital Literacy programmes, as well as whole-school initiatives such as Antibullying and Internet Safety Week, ensuring a consistent and supportive message around digital wellbeing in line with our school's Mission Statement and Wellbeing Action Plan.

**Ratification, Implementation and Review**

- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 28/5/26
- This policy has been made available to School Personnel and the Parents' Association. It is also published on the School Website and the School App. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the patron upon request.
- This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every two years. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to School Personnel and the Parents' Association. The review will also be published on the School Website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education.

Signed: Mug Loughnane
Joan Hogan
**Chairperson of Board of Management**

Signed: John Kennedy
**John Kennedy**
**Principal/Secretary of Board of Management**

Date: 28/5/26

Date: 28/5/26

Date of next review: _____