Mobile Phone Policy

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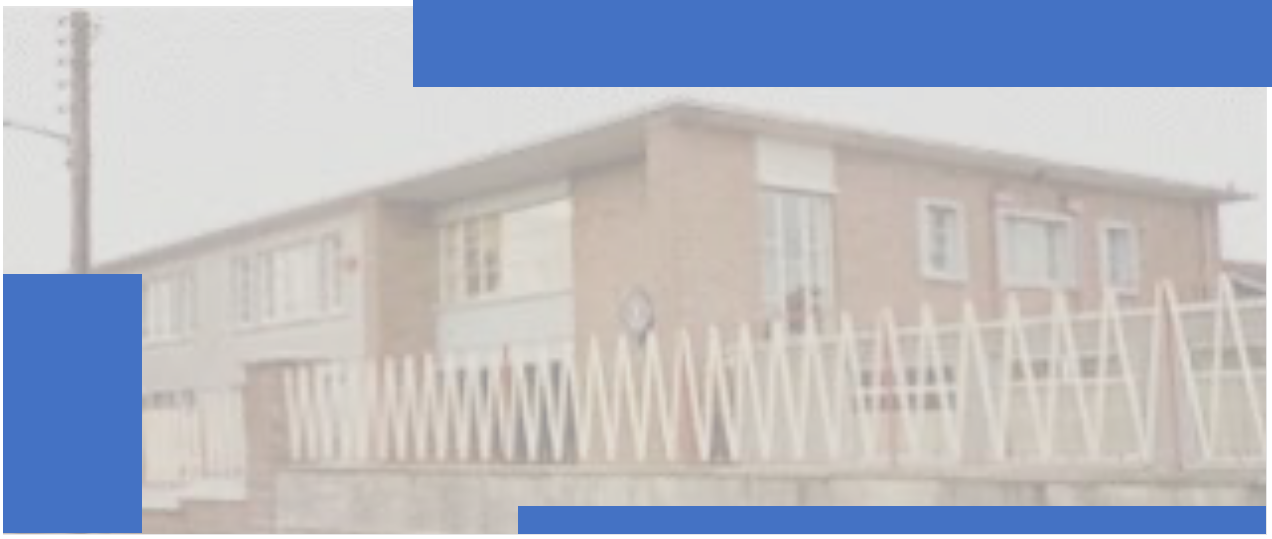
The following Policy has been developed in line with Circular 0045/2025 requirements.



APPROVED BY
Board of Management

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Policy

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1. About Us

Sacred Heart Secondary School is an all-girls voluntary secondary school with approximately 716 students, under the trusteeship of CEIST, originally established by the Mercy Order.

We have a long history of academic excellence. Our team of talented, dedicated and professional teaching staff create an engaging learning environment for all our students; one where our students are encouraged and nurtured to reach their potential in all aspects of their academic, personal and social development. We offer students a broad and balanced curriculum as well as an array of extra-curricular activities, social and spiritual opportunities providing them with a holistic and well-rounded education.

We pride ourselves on the inclusive, warm and caring atmosphere which is evident from the moment you enter our school community.

2. Board of Management

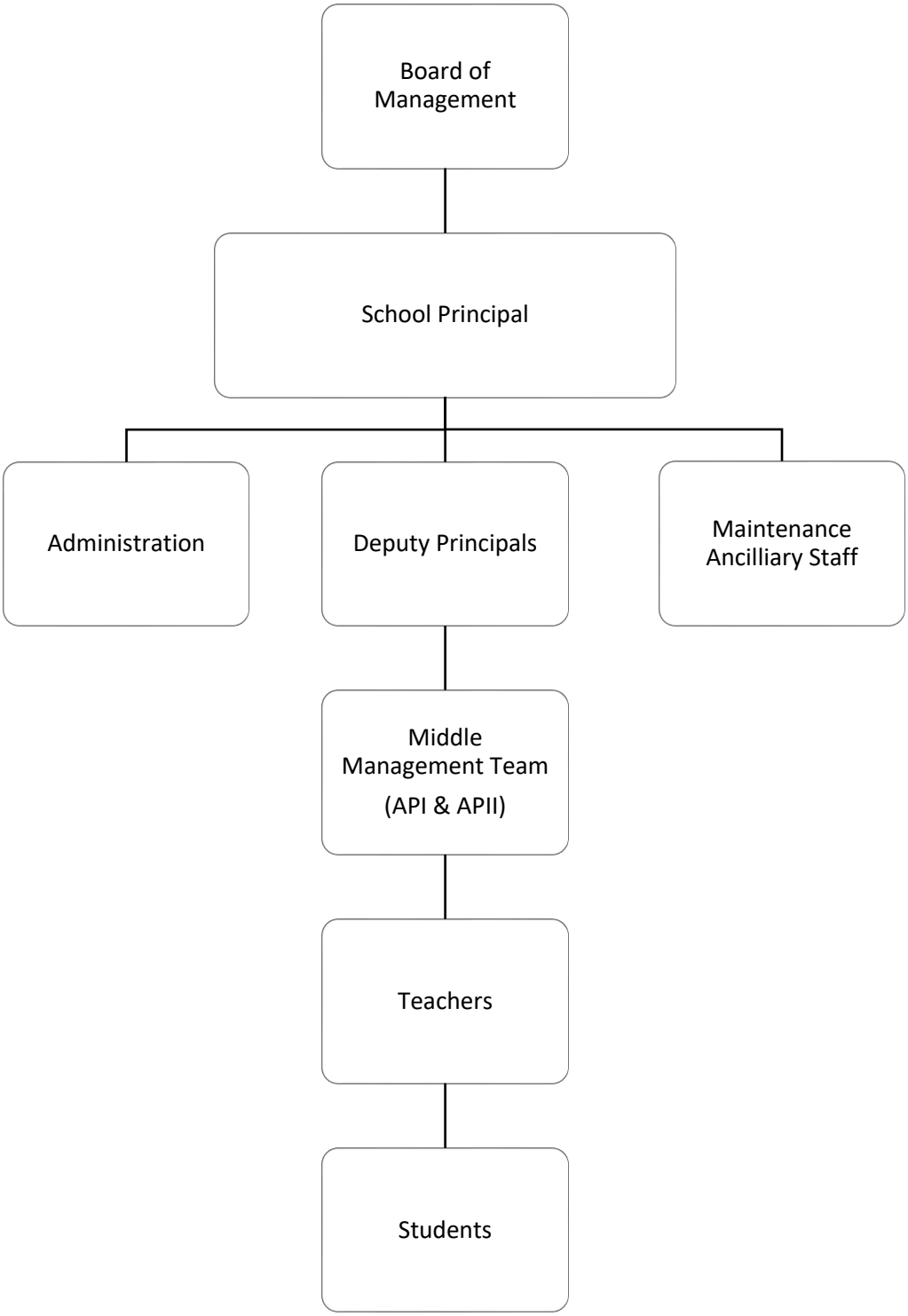
Sacred Heart Secondary School is managed by a Board of Management. Boards of Management have been exceptionally successful in the school. This success is due to the generosity, talent and dedication of the various members of the Boards and to the leadership of the Chairperson.

There are eight members on a Board of Management: Four nominees of the Trustees (including the chair), two nominees of teachers and two nominees of parents. The Principal is the Secretary to the Board but does not have a vote.

Board of Management Members	
Trustee Representative:	Ms. .Mary Mulligan (Chairperson)
Trustee Representative:	Mr. Bernard Mohan
Trustee Representative:	Ms. Kathryn Moran
Trustee Representative:	Mr. Chris Lennon
Parents' Representative:	Mr. Brendan Stephenson
Parents' Representative:	Ms. Paula Brooks
Staff Representative:	Ms. Helen Traynor
Staff Representative:	Ms. Fiona Morris
Secretary of the Board:	Ms. Leoni Carroll

3. Organisational Chart

The school is governed by a board of management. The Principal manages the school including all aspects of the day to day running of the school with members of the Senior Leadership Team, teachers and staff.



4. Policy Statement

Sacred Heart School (SHS) is committed to a phone-free school day to promote learning, wellbeing, safety and positive social interaction.

In line with Department of Education & Youth (DEY) Circular 0045/2025, all post-primary schools must implement a policy to restrict the use of, and access to, personal mobile phones by students for the duration of the school day, including breaks and lunchtimes.

SHS will implement this restriction through secure Yondr pouches.

The policy was developed in consultation with the school community and will be published on the school website www.sacredheart.ie

To support practical implementation, SHS has availed of the DEY funding scheme for secure mobile phone storage solutions (per Circular 0046/2025), which recognises portable secure lockable pouches as an eligible solution.

SHS is a recognised post-primary girls' school; this policy applies to all enrolled students

5. Rationale

Learning & Focus: Reducing mobile phone access during school improves concentration and engagement.

Wellbeing & Safety: Limiting phone access reduces exposure to cyberbullying/inappropriate content and supports healthier digital habits.

Social Development: Phone-free breaks encourage face-to-face interaction and a stronger sense of community

6. Scope

This policy governs students' personal mobile phones and other personal smart devices capable of messaging/recording (e.g., smartwatches), on school premises and during school-related activities (trips, matches, rehearsals), from arrival until dismissal. It does not apply while travelling to/from school or after the school day ends except when travelling with the school or attending school related events.

7. Definitions

- Yondr pouch: A lockable, soft pouch kept by the student that renders the phone inaccessible during the school day. Unlocking occurs at designated bases at dismissal or when a teacher authorises supervised access for learning.
- Unlocking base/station: A magnetic device used to open pouches at designated times/locations, supervised by staff.

8. Procedures (How the Yondr System works in SHS)

Arrival & Pouching

- Students switch off their phone before entering the school. They do not turn a mobile phone on unless it is with the permission of a member of staff.
- At the beginning of the first class, students open their Yondr pouch and place their phone in their pouch and secure it.
- Students retain possession of the sealed pouch throughout the day. It must be visible and left on the table during every class.

During the School Day

- Phones remain inaccessible in sealed pouches during classes, corridors, and at break/lunch, school events, activities and trips.
- If a teacher requires phones for learning, the teacher will facilitate temporary unlocking and re-pouching immediately after the task.
- Phones must not be turned on unless under the guidance of a staff member.

Dismissal & Un-pouching

- At the end of the day, students unlock pouches by utilising the teacher handheld unlocking system
- Late arrivals/early leavers students must pouch/un-pouch at Reception.

Exams/State Exams

- For all in-school and State examinations, phone prohibitions apply; phones remain sealed and out of use in line with exam rules. (SHS will communicate any State Examinations Commission updates each year.)

After-School Activities on Site

- After dismissal (once un-pouched), phone use is permitted unless a coach/teacher specifies otherwise for an activity/fixture.

9. Roles & Responsibilities

Students:

- Bring their Yondr pouch daily;
- Keep it in good condition;
- Follow pouching/unpouching procedures;
- Never attempt to tamper with the pouch or an unlocking base.
- Ensure mobile phone is on the locker space
- Return at the end of the school year

Parents/Guardians:

- Sign the Phone/No Phone declaration form to include the phone make, model
- Refrain from phoning students during the school day
- Contact the School Office for urgent matters
- Support the policy at home

Staff:

- Supervise pouching and unlocking of pouches, during P 1 and P 6, where required;
- Apply sanctions per this policy and the Code of Behaviour.
- Year Heads/Management: Oversee implementation, exemptions, sanctions, communications, and review.
- Carry out random pouch checks

10. Exemptions

- SHS will consider limited exemptions for s**ignificant** medical or special educational needs (e.g., monitoring apps), assessed case-by-case.
- Any approved access is narrowly tailored, time-bound, and recorded, consistent with DEY guidance on considering possible exemptions.

11. Emergencies & Communication

Parent → Student: Contact the School Office; messages will be relayed, and the student can return a call from a school phone, if appropriate.
Student → Parent: Students may request to use a school phone during the day for urgent matters.
School Emergencies: SHS will follow critical incident procedures; staff will coordinate communications.

12. Sanctions (Breaches & Tampering)

Breaches undermine a safe, phone-free environment. Sanctions escalate in line with the Code of Behaviour and may include confiscation, detention, loss of privileges, parental meeting, on report, pink sheets, negative behaviour recorded on Vsware and suspension for serious/repeated infractions. The following are examples (non-exhaustive):

1. **Phone visible/turned on/unpouched and/or used during the day outside authorised use:** phone/pouch confiscated until end of day; *Incident recorded; automatic pink sheet.*

2. **Second breach - Phone visible/turned on/unpouched and/or used during the day outside authorised use:** phone/pouch confiscated until end of day; *Incident recorded; automatic pink sheet and a detention scheduled within a week after the incident – Be mindful that escalation occurs on repeat.*

3. **Third breach to procedures as outlined above, including using an unlocking system without permission:** *phone/pouch confiscated until parent/guardian collects mobile phone. Incident recorded; automatic pink sheet, two detentions scheduled consecutive weeks after the incident* – Be mindful that escalation on repeat.

4. **Repeated breach of the procedures** is treated as serious non-compliance. *Mobile Phone confiscated, On report, sanctions up to a suspension*

5. **Failure to bring pouch**: *phone confiscated and held by Senior Leadership Team until the end of the day - Be mindful that escalation on repeat..*

6. **Tampering (e.g., forcing lock, using/possessing an unlocking magnet)** is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. *Sanction outlined above will be utilised. Treated as a serious offence; may lead to suspension.*

SHS adopts strong sanctions to embed procedures from the outset and avoid ambiguity, consistent with the Department's emphasis on clear, consistent, whole-school approaches.

13. Lost/Damaged Pouches

Care & Custody:

- The Yondr pouch is school property issued for student use; students are responsible for daily care and the return of the pouch at the end of the school year.

Damage/Replacement:

- Deliberate damage or loss requires replacement at a cost of €15.00 to the student/family; repeated incidents will be sanctioned. Examples of damaged pouches include: torn, bent/cut pin, signs of force to black button on flap, damage to the black ball, Pouch opens without unlocking station.

14. Data Protection & Privacy

SHS does not access, process, or store content from student phones. Where SHS collects minimal data (e.g., Mobile Phone Information Form identifying a student's everyday phone for operational control), such data is processed under the school's Data Protection Policy and retained only as necessary. (See SHS website policies.)

15. Funding, Assets & Accountability

- SHS has implemented Yondr using the DEY storage funding (Circular 0046/2025, as applicable.
- Equipment is school property and will be reissued/recycled (e.g., from outgoing 6th years to incoming 1st years) in line with the circular.
- Students loss of their pouch will require replacing at students personal cost €15.00

16. Consultation, Publication & Review

In accordance with DEY guidance, the policy was developed following consultation with parents/guardians, students, and staff

The policy is published on the SHS website and reviewed annually or when national guidance changes.

17. Related Policies

- Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Code of Behaviour / Positive Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying (Bí Cineálta)
- Child Safeguarding & Risk Assessment 2025
- Data Protection / Privacy
- Health & Safety
  (see SHS Policies page on www.sacredheart.ie)

The SHS Mobile Phone Policy will be reviewed annually in light of experience and future developments within the organisation.

Signed Mary Mulligan _____ Date: 17th Dec 2025
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed Seán Carroll _____ Date: 17th Dec 2025
Principal