



# ECC Mobile Phone Policy

Elphin Community College – October 2025



## Table of Contents

1. Mission Statement of Elphin Community College .....	1
2. Rationale for the policy .....	1
3. Procedures .....	2
Arrival.....	2
During the day .....	2
Communication .....	2
Medical or exceptional circumstances.....	2
4. Authorised Use.....	3
5. Flexibility and Support.....	3
6. Forgotten, Lost or Damaged Pouches.....	3
7. Unauthorised Use and Sanctions.....	4
8. Consultation timeline.....	5

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## 1. Mission Statement of Elphin Community College

Elphin Community College is committed to providing a caring, inclusive and student-centred environment where each individual is supported to reach their full potential academically, personally, and socially. Our vision is to empower students to become confident, responsible, and active members of society.

As an ETB school, the [ETBI's Patron's Framework on Ethos](#) underpins all policies and practices in Elphin Community College. It guides the values we promote, how we deliver learning experiences, and the quality of relationships across our community. As such, Elphin Community College is committed to and underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education
- Care
- Equality
- Community
- Respect



## 2. Rationale for the policy

This policy seeks to:

1. Protect the welfare, wellbeing, and safety of all members of the school community.
2. Create an environment conducive to excellent learning and teaching.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and legislation:

- The **Code of Positive Behaviour**
- The **Anti-Bullying/Bí Cineálta Policy**
- The **Education Act, 1998**
- The **Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.**
- **Department of Education Circular 0045/2025**

While mobile devices are integral to modern life, inappropriate use can disrupt concentration, limit social interaction, and impact student wellbeing. This policy balances digital responsibility with educational focus and student care, ensuring that

the welfare and safety of all members of the school community remain central to excellent teaching and learning.

This policy is informed by the core values of **excellence in education, care, and respect**, where the welfare, wellbeing and safety of the entire school community must be respected and cared for in order to create an environment that is supportive of excellent learning and teaching.

***From September 2025, ECC will operate as a mobile-free school (for students) during the school day.***

### 3. Procedures

#### Arrival

- Students must ensure phones are **turned off** before entering the building.
- At the start of the first class, each student will place their phone in the pouch and lock it in the presence of the teacher.

#### During the day

- Phones remain in pouches at all times, including break and lunch.
- Phones will be un-pouched at designated unlocking stations at the end of the school day.
- Year Heads, the Deputy Principal, or the Principal may carry out inspections.

#### Communication

- All communication between parents/guardians and the school during the school day must be directed through the school office via the VShare App, by email, at [info.elphin@gretb.ie](mailto:info.elphin@gretb.ie), or by phone on (071) 963 5031.
- Students who need to leave school early must follow the normal sign-out procedure. Parents/guardians should submit a note through VShare, and where a student is under 18, they must be signed out by a parent/guardian. The Principal, Deputy Principal, or school secretary will then unlock the student's phone pouch at the office.

#### Medical or exceptional circumstances

- Students who require regular access for medical or translation reasons for example, will be provided with an adapted pouch upon submission of a consultant's letter or relevant documentation.

- Staff will be notified of any student with an approved adapted pouch to ensure appropriate understanding and support.

#### 4. Authorised Use

- **Supervised use during class activities:**

Teachers may temporarily unlock phone pouches for supervised educational purposes. Phones may be used only as directed by the teacher. Any other use constitutes a breach of this policy. All phones must be immediately re-secured once the activity ends.

#### **School trips and excursions:**

Students must keep their phones sealed in their pouches for the duration of the bus journey. When the group arrives at the destination, the accompanying teacher may unlock pouches using a portable unlocking device to allow supervised phone use for a designated period (e.g. taking photos or contacting parents if permitted). Before returning to the bus, students must re-seal their phones in the pouches.

#### 5. Flexibility and Support

- If a student forgets their phone or pouch, they must collect a signed “Forgotten Pouch/No Phone” slip from the Deputy Principal at the start of the school day. The Deputy Principal will securely store the phone for the remainder of the school day.
- Flexibility will be provided for exceptional circumstances under staff supervision (e.g. sending an urgent message to a parent/guardian). The supervising person will log all exceptions.
- The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged phones.

#### 6. Forgotten, Lost or Damaged Pouches

- If a student forgets their pouch, their phone must be handed to the Deputy Principal for secure storage until the end of the day.
- Repeated incidents will incur VSWare points and detention.
- Replacement costs:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Replacement €20
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Replacement €25

3<sup>rd</sup> Replacement €30

- Deliberate damage to a pouch is a grave offence and is addressed under the Code of Positive Behaviour, consistent with the handling of damage to school property.

## 7. Unauthorised Use and Sanctions

If a student uses or displays their phone without permission during the school day:

<b>Incident</b>	<b>Sanction</b>
<b>First Breach</b>	Phone confiscated until the end of the school day; 3 VSware points assigned; morning detention issued.
<b>Second Breach</b>	Phone confiscated; Parents/Guardians must collect the phone; Friday detention issued; 3 VSware points assigned.
<b>Third Breach</b>	Phone confiscated; parents/guardians collect the phone; suspension may apply, per standard school procedures.

From the second breach onwards, phones must be collected by a parent/guardian from the school office.

### **Additional Rules:**

- Students must not use another student's pouch
- Second or hidden devices are considered deliberate breaches and will incur serious disciplinary action.
- Persistent breaches or defiance will be referred to the Principal and may lead to further sanctions under the Code of Positive Behaviour.

## 8. Consultation timeline

In accordance with Circular 0045/2025, this policy was developed following consultation with staff, the Student Council, the Parents' Association, and the Board of Management.

Shared with Staff for Review:		3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2025	
Shared with Student Council for review:			
Shared with Parents Associated for review:			
Shared with BOM for review:			
Ratified by BOM:			
<b>Policy Review Date:</b>		Next Review Date: October 2027	
Signed:	Date:	Signed:	Date:
Chairperson BOM		Secretary BOM	