



St Joseph's College

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13th April 2026

Re: **Mobile Phone Policy & Digital Devices**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope this letter finds you well.

I would like to sincerely thank the large number of parents who took the time to respond to our **Mobile Phone Survey** in January. Your feedback has informed our planning and decision-making around use of Mobile Phones in school.

Following careful consideration, and in accordance with the **Department of Education & Youth Circular 0045/2025 - Restricting the Use of and Access to Personal Mobile Phones by Students during the School Day**, St Joseph's College will be revising the **Mobile Phone Policy** and implementing a **Mobile Phone Storage Solution** from August 2026. The purpose of this change is to restrict the use of mobile phones by students during the school day for the following reasons, which are outlined in the Department of Education Circular;

- to improve the learning experience of students by reducing distraction
- to reduce the risk of cyberbullying and access to inappropriate content during school hours
- to increase traditional social interactions between students at break times

The revised **Mobile Phone Policy** and the **Mobile Phone Storage Solution** will apply to all students in the school from August 2026. On return to school, each student will be provided with a mobile phone storage pouch. As part of the new approach, students will be required to place their phone in the pouch before arriving at school and it will remain locked and stored away for the duration of the school day. The school has received ringfenced funding from the Department of Education and Youth to pay for the implementation of the Mobile Phone Storage Solution. Further details on the new approach to restricting use of Mobile Phones in school will be given to students and parents before the end of May.

The responses from the survey of parents' views on use of phones earlier in the year, clearly indicate that a majority of parents are of the view that mobile phones in lessons can be more of a distraction than a useful learning tool. In addition, parents would prefer their daughter to use a school device instead of a phone for learning purposes.

It is increasingly the case, that 2nd Year and 5th Year students require access to digital devices for State Examination Assessment purposes - that is, **Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) for Junior Cycle** and **Additional Assessment Components (AACs) for Leaving Certificate - worth 40% of marks in the Leaving Certificate**. The use of devices for these assessments can support students in researching and presenting their work more effectively.

At present the school has some sets of chrome books and other digital devices for students' use. However, given the size of our student body, it is not feasible for the school to provide a device to all students who may

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need them and the requirement is expected to increase in the future with the introduction of more subjects completing the Leaving Certificate AACs. **Therefore, the Board of Management has decided on the introduction of student digital devices, for the current 1st Year and Transition Year students who will be in 2nd Year and 5th Year in August 26.** This is intended to equip students adequately, so that they have the best possible opportunity to excel in the State Examinations - both at Junior and Senior cycle.

The intended introduction date for student devices for these two year groups (i.e, current 1st Years and TYs who will be in 2nd Year and 5th Year in September) is January 2027. This timeline is designed to align with the period when students will require devices for completion of CBAs in 2nd Year and AACs in 5th Year, while also allowing families time to plan for the associated cost of the device.

The device will be a specific type and model selected by the school to ensure suitability for educational purposes and compatibility with the school's Wi-Fi and IT systems, and to enable staff to be upskilled on one device to effectively support students using a common platform. Further details of the type of device, cost, where it can be purchased, payment plans and other relevant information will be provided to parents of 1st Year and Transition Year in the coming weeks.

We fully recognise that this represents an additional cost for families, and this has been carefully considered in making the decision and in setting the proposed timeline. Our main intention is to ensure that our students are equipped to have every chance to excel in Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate exams and to develop digital skills required for university/workplace after the Leaving Certificate.

Finally, we wish to inform parents that all students will continue to use textbooks, copies, and other traditional educational resources as they have done up to now. All students will continue to receive books, copies and other educational resources under the Department of Education, School Book Scheme. There are no plans for devices to replace other learning tools and resources such as copies, books, notes, etc Instead the devices will be used for specific identified educational purposes only and not for all educational activities. The device will be one tool along with other educational tools, used as part of a blended approach to teaching, learning and assessment.

We will provide further details in the coming weeks. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Bernadette Fitzgerald

Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management

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