

Nagle Community College (Cork ETB)
Student Mobile Phone Policy (Post-Primary)

1) Rationale & scope

Nagle CC is committed to a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment. In line with Department of Education guidance for post-primary schools, the school restricts the use of and access to personal mobile phones by students for the duration of the school day, including breaks and lunchtime. This policy applies on school grounds and during the school day (including assemblies, tutor time, study periods and transitions between classes). It does not apply to travel to/from school .

2) Definitions

- Personal mobile phone: smartphones and any SIM-enabled device capable of calls, messaging, internet or app use.
- School day: from arrival **on campus or in school building** until departure, including break times.
- Storage pouch: the locked, school-approved pouch issued to each student for securing their phone during the school day.

3) Policy statement

- Students may bring a phone to school but must have it powered off and locked in their pouch for the entire school day unless a specific, approved exemption applies or a staff member instructs otherwise.
- Teaching & learning: Nagle CC provides school-managed digital devices for curriculum use where appropriate. Personal phones are not required for learning activities under this policy.
- Contact during the day: Parents/guardians who need to reach a student should contact the school office; messages will be relayed promptly.

4) Implementation mechanism — phone pouches

- Issue & registration: Each student is issued a named pouch.
- On arrival: Students place their powered-off phone in the pouch and lock it.
- Unlock points: Magnet unlock stations are located at designated exits; pouches are only unlocked at day's end (or earlier where an approved exemption or staff instruction applies).
- Breakages/loss: Report immediately. The school will provide a temporary solution; deliberate damage/misuse is a breach of this policy.
- Spare pouches: Available from the office for emergencies/replacements.
- Trips/fixtures: The policy applies to school-day activities. Where off-site use is necessary for safeguarding or logistics, supervising staff will specify arrangements case-by-case in advance, consistent with this policy.

5) Possible exemptions (how they work)

Exemptions apply only for medical, wellbeing, specific practical reasons, or special educational needs, and allow access solely for the stated purpose. Examples include (non-exhaustive):

- Diabetes monitoring and/or insulin delivery mechanisms
- Blood-pressure monitoring
- Seizure conditions requiring monitoring via an app
- Mental-health conditions where unrestricted communication with parents/guardians is needed
- SEN-related needs (e.g., visual/hearing impairment, speech/language supports)
- EAL supports requiring specific language apps

Process:

1. Parent/guardian submits an Exemption Request Form with relevant supporting information (e.g., care plan/medical or SEN documentation).
2. The Principal and SEN Co-ordinator consider the request; additional professional input may be sought where appropriate.
3. A decision is issued in writing, and reviewed at agreed intervals or if circumstances change.
4. Exemptions specify when/where the phone may be accessed and any controls (e.g., silent mode; use only in a designated space under supervision).

6) Non-compliance & responses (graduated)

Linked to the Code of Behaviour and applied fairly and consistently. Typical staged responses include:

5. Reminder/reset
6. Phone secured by staff (in office) until end of day.
7. Parent/guardian collection of phone for repeated breaches and/or detention .
8. Loss of privileges and/or report to Year Head/Assistant Year Head.
9. Serious/persistent breaches may escalate per Code of Behaviour, including possible suspension where warranted.

Safeguarding & data: Staff will not access phone content except where a serious safeguarding concern arises (per Child Protection Procedures) or when directed by An Garda Síochána.

Confiscated phones are stored securely and returned through a recorded process.

7) Emergencies

If a student needs urgent access (e.g., health concern), they should speak to a teacher, Year Head or the office. The school will facilitate appropriate contact and/or access consistent with any exemption.

8) Before/after school & after-school study

This restriction does not apply to travel to/from school. The school may set reasonable expectations for off-hour activities where appropriate (e.g., rehearsals/study).

9) Examination rules

During state exams and in-house exams, device rules follow SEC and school assessment regulations. Breaches may have serious consequences under examination rules.

10) Roles & responsibilities

- Students: Comply with this policy; secure phones in pouches from arrival to departure.
- Parents/Guardians: Support the policy; route messages via the office; submit exemption requests where applicable.
- Teachers/SNAs: Reinforce expectations; follow response steps; support students with approved exemptions.
- Year Heads/Assistant Year Heads, Tutors: Monitor patterns; apply graduated responses; liaise with parents.
- Principal/Deputy: Oversight of implementation, exemptions, communication, and review.

11) Related policies & frameworks

- Bí Cineálta (Anti-Bullying) Policy — include online/cyberbullying prevention measures.
- Data Protection Policy — records of exemptions and confiscation logs.
- Code of Behaviour — graduated responses for non-compliance.

12) Procurement & funding (for transparency)

Phone pouch procurement follows public procurement requirements; funding is available under the Department's storage solution scheme.

13) Communication & consultation

The policy has been developed in consultation with students (Student Council), staff, and parents/guardians, approved by the Board (Cork ETB), and will be published on the school website and student journals. Information sessions/flyers will accompany the rollout.

14) Rollout timeline (proposed)

10. Week 1–2: Staff briefing; FAQs; Student Council input; Parent notice.
11. Week 3: Pouch issue & registration by class; unlocking station demo in tutor time.
12. Week 4: Go-live (soft start: reminders only).
13. Week 5: Full implementation and graduated responses.

14. End of Term 1: Policy review point (quick adjustments as needed).

15) Review

This policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner if required by new circulars or school experience).

Approved by: Board of Management (Cork ETB)

Commencement date: _____ Next review:

Mary Scruen *2/12/2025*