

# St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Killyclogher



## Mobile Phone & Smart Watch Policy

Review of Policy	November 2025
Ratification of Policy by the Board of Governors	November 2025
Next Review Date	November 2028

## **Introduction and Aims**

At St. Mary's Primary and Nursery School, we believe that the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. This policy has been drawn up in the best interests of pupil safety and staff professionalism.

The aim of this policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse, with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools.

We are all aware that mobile phones, smart phones and smart watches are now a feature of modern society and an increasing number of our pupils and staff own one. The increasing sophistication of mobile technology presents a number of difficult management/safety issues for schools, namely:

- The high value of many phones/smartphones/smart watches
- The integration of cameras into phones and watches leading to potential child protection and data protection issues
- The capacity to surf the internet without school filtering systems
- The potential to misuse a phone/smart watch in other ways during the school day, e.g. recording video, texting etc.

However, as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on our school site. This includes staff, volunteers, governors, children, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

This Mobile Phone and Smart Watch Policy should also be read in relation to the following policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Use of Images Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy

## **Mobile Phones, Smart Watches and Devices – Pupils**

We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. However, we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others.

Therefore:

- Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school or to school trips or wear smart watches with phone/camera capabilities.
- If pupils require a mobile phone for afterschool their parents/guardians must leave it at the school office for collection again by a parent/guardian at home time.
- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones, smart watches and/or devices at school or on trips.
- Mobile phones brought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day to the parent/guardian.

If a child needs to contact his/her parents/guardians, the child will be allowed to use a school phone. If parents need to contact children urgently, they should phone the school office and a message will be relayed promptly.

### **Staff Code of Conduct**

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a co-operative workforce where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other, thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment, leading to increased productivity. Our aim is, therefore, that all staff:

- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse;
- know how to minimise risk;
- avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations;
- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use;
- are responsible for self-moderation of their behaviour;
- are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly.

### **Mobile Phones, Smart Watches and Devices – Staff**

An agreement of trust is promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within our school setting, which is agreed to by all users:

- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or pocket) during class time.
- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children.
- In the event of exceptional circumstances (e.g. an acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Principal aware of this and can have their phone on, in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- Use of phones (including receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (e.g. in the classroom, in the playground).

- Staff should use security features to protect access to functions of their phone.
- Staff are not, at any time, permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and iPads.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Principal.
- For communication during offsite activities, staff should ensure that mobile use is appropriate and professional (and never includes taking photographs of children).
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office.

### **Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors**

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow this policy in the same way that it relates to staff whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

### **Parents**

While we would prefer parents do not use their mobile phones while at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication, at all times.

We, therefore, ask that parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site, is courteous and appropriate to the school environment. We also allow parents to photograph or video school events, such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones, but insist that parents do not publish images or recordings (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.

### **Dissemination**

This policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their Induction. It will also be available to parents via the school website and from the school office on request.