



Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Policy



Purpose

- The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents and guardians take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at school. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.
- Edmund Rice College has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students, parents and guardians guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.
- The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions and extracurricular activities both in school and off-site.
- Not every eventuality can be covered in this policy and issues that arise that are not referred to here will be dealt with in the spirit of this policy at the discretion of the school.

Rationale

- The school recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.
- Edmund Rice College accepts that parents/guardians give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety.

Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents/guardians. It is incumbent upon parents or guardians to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/mis-use of those capabilities. The school cannot be held responsible for students misusing mobile phones or social media.
- The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.
- Parents/guardians are reminded that in all cases, the school office remains the main point of contact. Pupils and parent/guardians should not be in direct contact during the school day.

Acceptable Uses

- Mobile phones should be switched off and kept out of sight during classroom lessons and while moving between lessons.
- Parents/guardians are requested that in cases of emergency they contact the school first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make any necessary arrangements.
- Mobile phones should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school.
- Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text or picture messages.

Unacceptable Uses

- Phones are permitted in school. Calls, texts and use of social media or the internet are not permissible on phones at any time during school hours. Phones may sometimes be used for class research or art but only when directed by class teachers.
- Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping. They should be turned off during lessons.
- Using mobile phones to bully or threaten other students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.
- It is unacceptable to take a picture of a member of staff without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to hand over the phone immediately.
- Headphones/earphones should not be used whilst moving around the school during the day, whilst waiting for or during lessons and assemblies.

Theft or damage

- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones while in school or travelling to and from school.
- It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential.

Inappropriate conduct

- Mobile phones are banned from all examinations. Students MUST hand phones to invigilators or front office staff before entering the exam hall. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination may have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified. Exam board rules will be final.
- Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence.

Sanctions

- Students who infringe the rules set out in this document will have their phone confiscated by teachers.
- On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone will be confiscated by the teacher and taken to the front office to be stored in the safe. The student will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day and a record will be made of the incident.
- On the second infringement parents/guardians will be asked to collect the phone from school or the pupil may collect the phone at 3pm on a Friday.
- Any further infringements of the mobile phone code of conduct may result in a ban on bringing a mobile phone to school and in any event will be dealt with a Senior Leader or the Principal.

Signed by Child: _____ **Date:** _____

Signed by Parent/Guardian: _____ **Date:** _____