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Mobile Phone, Electronic Devices & Smartwatch Policy

Introductory Statement:

This policy was drawn up in response to technological advances, which have seen a significant increase in hand held electronic devices and smartwatches amongst the school population over recent years.

Rationale:

- Mobile phones, Tablets, IPods, Smartwatches, Game Boys, PSP's, MP3's etc. are intrusive and distracting in a school environment
- Strategies must be put in place to reduce the intrusiveness of unauthorised technology in a school situation
- Some electronic devices may be harmful due to frequent use
- Mobile phones and other devices may be used to conduct bullying campaigns

Relationship to School Ethos:

The use of mobile phones, smartwatches and other electronic games contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment and unsupervised use is not conducive to learning - a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of St. Marnock's N.S.

Aims:

- To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones, smartwatches and other electronic devices at school.
- To provide a safe and secure environment for our children to learn in.
- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning.

Definition of a Smartwatch: A smartwatch is a portable device worn on the wrist that includes computerised functionality and that can support apps and may act as an extension of your mobile phone.

Internal School Procedures:

The following are the guidelines for mobile phone/electronic games/smartwatches usage in the school:

- The use of school owned electronic devices (iPads/ laptops etc.) is strictly under the supervision of staff and in line with our IT Policy and Acceptable Use Policy

Children are not permitted to bring in or use mobile phones/smartwatches/electronic devices during school hours OR during any school related activities.

In the exceptional circumstances where parental permission has been given and approved by the school (Refer to Appendix 1), the following procedures will apply:

- Liability for any loss, damage or theft of any device is **NOT** under any circumstances the responsibility of the staff or the Board of Management
- Children who urgently need to contact home during school hours may do so through the school secretary using the school landline phone.
- All mobile phones/smartwatches and electronic devices are banned, even during after school activities
- **Mobile phones/Smartwatches and other electronic devices will be confiscated if they are seen in school. The item will be returned when a parent collects it.**
- The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of the Code
- If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage or accessing social media sites with a mobile phone, this will be regarded as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and disciplinary action will be taken accordingly and the phone will be confiscated
- Smartwatches are not permitted at anytime on the school grounds.

School trips and Outings

- Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones/smartwatches with them on school trips and tours. The procedures above apply to school outings and trips.

In exceptional circumstances, when a parent feels that a child needs to have a mobile phone/electronic device/smartwatch with them in school, the following procedures apply:

- **A written letter of permission must be given to the principal.** This will state that the parents have given permission for their child to have a mobile phone/smartwatch in school. The parents must assure the school that their child will follow the rules about mobile phones/smartwatches in school and understand the consequences if their child breaks these rules. The school phone in the secretary's office should be used for this purpose.
- **In the exceptional circumstances where a child is required by their parent to bring a mobile phone/smartwatch/electronic device to school, it must be switched off and given to the class teacher immediately upon arrival into the classroom.** It will be stored in a secure place until the child is going home from school. This arrangement will apply when the child is on the school grounds or while the child is off the school grounds but under the care of the school.
- Should a parent need to contact their child during school hours, they should do so by giving their message to the secretary through the school office. **Parents must not contact their children on their mobile phone/smartwatches/electronic devices during school hours.**

Guidelines for Staff

- Staff have access to the school landline if urgent calls need to be made to parents
- Staff personal calls are normally confined to break times

Roles and Responsibilities: All staff share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy with the co-operation of parents and pupils.

Evaluation: This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis and amendments added as new technology comes on stream.

Implementation: This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 13th June 2024

Signed: _____

Ciarán McCormack,
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Appendix 1

Dear Principal,

I am writing to ask permission for my child _____ to have a mobile phone/smartwatch in school. My child needs to have a mobile phone/smartwatch in school for the following reason:

I understand that the mobile phone/smartwatch must be switched off and given to the class teacher upon arrival to school and it will be stored in a secure place while on the school grounds.

I understand that the mobile phone/smartwatch will be confiscated if it is switched on and used during school time 8.45 – 2.30pm.

I understand that if a photo or video is taken on the mobile phone/smartwatch or the internet is accessed, this will be considered a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour.

I understand that the school accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage of a mobile phone/smartwatch while on the school grounds.

I understand that parents must not communicate with their child by mobile phone/smartwatch during the school day.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____