



# Coláiste Pobail Bheanntíraí

Seskin

Bantry,

Co. Cork.

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## Mobile Phone Policy

### Rationale

The promotion of digital technologies for teaching, learning and assessment is fundamental to the *Department of Education and Skills* (DES) policy document, "The Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-20". This DES policy document is complemented by the provisions of another DES document, Circular Letter 38/2018, which acknowledges that the use of digital technologies such as mobile phones, in a school setting, must be moderated by teachers and framed in the context of a whole-school policy governing their use in the classroom and during the school day. This *Coláiste Pobail Bheanntíraí* (CPB) mobile phone policy has been developed in response to the above 'Digital Strategy' and in compliance with the provisions of the DES Circular Letter 38/2018. This CPB policy document has been formulated in an open and inclusive manner by way of consultation with representatives of all members of the school community and is set within the framework of the school's 'Code of Behaviour'. It is also consistent with other CPB policies relevant to the use of mobile phones in the school, particularly the school 'Anti-bullying' policy and its 'Internet Acceptable Usage'.

### Aims

To outline the school's position on the acceptable use of mobile phones during the school day in *Coláiste Pobail Bheanntíraí* and the procedures to be followed in the event that breaches of the policy occur.

### Restrictions on use of mobile phone

- Students are required to power off mobile phones and other electronic devices such as I-pods during class contact time.
- Once the school day commences at 8.45am, students may only use such devices at short break and lunch time ie. they must remain powered off and not in use between classes.
- The only exception to this rule is when the teacher gives clear, explicit permission and authorisation for the phones to be powered on and states clearly the restricted conditions under which they can be used during class time. It must be clear to all students that they have received permission from the teacher in advance before the device is powered on
- Under no circumstances must camera phones be used to invade individual privacy and/or to bully/intimidate others.

## **Sanctions**

- A student who uses their mobile phone in class without teacher permission or who uses it outside of the designated time will have their mobile phone confiscated.
  - Designated times for allowed use:
    - Break-time (10:10am – 10:25am, unless changed)
    - Lunch-time (13:05pm – 13:45pm)
  - Confiscated phones to be brought to the 'Main Office' where office staff will put the confiscated phone in an envelope and will write the name of the student on this envelope which will then be stored in a secure box.
  - Parents/guardians to be sent a text by the office informing them that their son/daughter's phone has been confiscated and that it can be collected from the 'Main Office' during the following office hours:
    - 8:15am – 5:15pm (Monday – Thursday)
    - 8:15am – 4:00 pm (Friday)
  - If a parent/guardian is unable to collect the phone, the parent/guardian can nominate another adult to collect the phone on their behalf.
  - All phones to be signed for when collected.
  - Students over the age of 18 will be allowed collect and sign for their own phone at the end of the school day that the phone was confiscated.
  
- It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace/harass another person and in instances where this occur, the school authorities may consider it appropriate to involve external agencies such as An Garda Síochána. Furthermore, if a teacher has sufficient grounds for suspicion that a mobile phone has illegal or offensive/harmful material stored on it, the student's phone will be confiscated by the teacher who will deliver the phone to the 'Main Office' and parents/guardians will then be informed without delay and the matter may also be referred to An Garda Síochána.
  
- Instances of where students are using mobile phones to conduct cyberbullying will be investigated and dealt with as per the school 'Anti- bullying policy'.

## **Review and Ratification of policy**

This policy is to be reviewed regularly. Last updated May 2019

## **Appendix A: Advice to students and their parents/guardians**

- Mobile phones which are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed in at the 'Main Office'.
- 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. Mobile phone and/or passwords should not be shared.
- Students who feel unwell and wish to go home should not contact parents/guardians by mobile phone. Such contact must be done at the 'Main Office' on the school phone so that the school is aware of any such arrangements.
- Parents/guardians are asked not to arrange to contact students by mobile phone during the school day, an arrangement which may necessitate the student breaking the school rule. Any necessary contact can be made with a student by phoning the school 'Main Office'.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost or accidentally damaged mobile phones. The safety and security of mobile phones is wholly a matter for students and their parents/guardians.