

**Personal Electronic Device Policy**

**Introduction and Rationale**

The possession and use of mobile/smart phones and smart watches by school students is common, even amongst primary school students. The use of mobile phones and personal devices (iPods, iPads, PSPs, MP3s or smart watches, etc.) presents a number of problems that can prove intrusive and distracting in a school environment. The capacity of many devices to take photographs, make videos or sound recordings could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images. In order to manage the issue of mobile phones, smart watches and other personal devices, this policy has been developed.

**Aim of Policy**

School Management is introducing a policy that prohibits the use by students of personal mobile/smart phones, smart watches and other personal devices, while on school premises or involved in school activities such as tours, trips or extra-curricular activities. This is in order to ensure a safe environment and to lessen intrusions on and distractions to children’s learning.

The use of personal mobile/smart phones and other electronic devices contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment, a provision that is central to the mission statement and ethos of Merlin Woods Primary School.

**School Procedures**

* The use of personal mobile/smart phones, smart watches and other personal devices by children who attend the school is not permitted while the children are on the school premises, on trips from the school or involved in extra curricular activities. The children should, therefore, not bring mobile phones and other personal devices to school or when engaging in school-related activities.
* Mobile/Smart phones, smart watches and other personal devices that are found in the school should be handed to the School Office.
* Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the School Secretary using the School landline phone 091 -761676.
* Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the School Office remains the first point of contact and can ensure that your child is reached quickly and a message passed on to them.
* Staff are permitted to use their phones for school-related business only or for emergencies. Staff should not use their phones for personal reasons during teacher-pupil contact time.

**Sanctions**

* Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other personal device for any purpose, it will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent/guardian/carer.
* The School will not be liable for replacing mobile phones or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged.
* The School incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and Acceptable Use Policy, and will treat breaches in the same manner as any other breach of these Policies.
* If a pupil uses a mobile phone or personal device to take photographs, video footage or recording of other pupils or staff members, or shares inappropriate messages this will be regarded as inappropriate behaviour, and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the School’s Code of Behaviour.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/personal device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the School in this regard is deemed ineffective as with all such incidents, the School may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí.

**School Trips and Outings**

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones and other personal devices with them on school trips and tours. Teachers will have a contact number in the event that it is necessary to make contact with a parent/guardian.

The Personal Electronic Device Policy is published on the school website - www.merlinwoodsprimaryschool.com.

**Policy Review**

This policy was ratified on the 14th of June 2022 and will be reviewed in 2025.

Signed: \_Fr. Martin Glynn \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_14th June 2022\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson Board of Management