



Personal Electronic Device Policy

Introductory Statement and Rationale

In our increasingly digital world, mobile phones, smartphones, smart watches and other personal devices have become a common part of everyday life among primary school students. While these devices offer many benefits, they also present several challenges, including:

- Mobile devices can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft.
- Mobile devices (and their cost and level of sophistication – or otherwise) can make pupils objects of envy or ridicule potentially causing disciplinary issues and increasing the risk of bullying.
- The use of mobile devices could be potentially undermining of classroom management, e.g. videoing and recording staff, etc.
- Using devices equipped with cameras and audio capabilities could lead to cyberbullying, child protection concerns, and data protection issues related to inappropriate capturing, usage, or distribution of content.

To effectively address these concerns, our school has implemented a policy that prohibits students from using mobile phones, smartphones, smart watches, and other personal electronic devices on school premises, including school grounds, during after-school activities on-site, or off-site school events.

Aim of this policy

To inform all members of the St. Conaire's school community about the procedures around this policy.

To ensure the safeguarding of children and to prevent the inappropriate use of mobile phones and other electronic devices on the school premises and during school related activities.

School Procedures

Pupils

1. Pupils of St. Conaire's N.S. are prohibited from possessing mobile phones, smart watches, or other internet-connected devices anywhere within the school building and grounds at any time, regardless of their usage. The only exceptions are devices specifically approved by the school for educational purposes, which may include

those recommended in an educational report or provided by the school to enhance learning.

2. Mobile phones and smart watches may not be used by pupils, for any purpose, on school premises and grounds or during off-site activities (school trips and tours, school swimming, or sporting activities). Teachers will have a contact number if it is necessary to contact a parent/guardian during school outings.
3. Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the School Secretary using the school landline phone 061-364694
4. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school phone remains the first point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and helped in an appropriate way.
5. Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be in possession of a mobile phone, smart watch or other electronic device for any purpose, it will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent/guardian along with a copy of this electronic device policy.
6. If a teacher suspects that a pupil has a mobile phone or electronic device in school containing unsuitable material, the phone will be confiscated as it constitutes a breach of policy, and an investigation will follow.
7. Where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the Gardaí for further investigation. Parents will be informed in such circumstances.
8. The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of policy.
9. It will be considered a grave violation if a pupil is discovered to have taken or shared photographs, recorded videos or audio using an electronic device of fellow pupils or a member of staff, or exchanging inappropriate messages, either inside or outside the school setting. Please refer to the school's Code of Behaviour Policy- Level 3 Gross Misbehaviour. Disciplinary measures will be implemented in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and the device will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been removed by the pupil in the presence of a teacher.
10. It's important to be aware that using a mobile phone or any other electronic device to threaten, harass, or offend another person is a criminal offence. Therefore, if the school's disciplinary actions are ineffective in such cases, the school may find it necessary to involve the Gardaí.
11. Where a parent believes that it is essential for their child to have a phone in school, the following procedures must be followed:
 - Parents must submit a letter to the Board of Management requesting permission for their child to bring a phone to school, including an explanation of why the phone is necessary.
 - One letter is required per school term.
 - The letter should be addressed to the chairperson of the board and may be handed into the school secretary.
 - The letter will be kept on file.

- If permission is approved, phones brought to school must be clearly labelled on the back with the child's name and class.
- The phone must be turned off and handed into the school office at the start of the school day.
- The school will keep the phone locked in a drawer until collected by the child at the end of the school day.
- The school will not be liable for replacing lost, stolen or damaged devices.
- Any child found to intentionally have a phone in school without a parental letter or without having handed it to the school office in the morning will have the phone confiscated.
- Confiscated phones will only be returned when a parent collects them.

Staff

1. Recognising the obligations and responsibilities entrusted to staff when working with children, it is crucial that staff maintain active engagement with children throughout their working hours. Staff members are expected to use their phones responsibly.
2. Regarding data, staff members are also advised to utilise mobile devices responsibly. They may use their devices to document/record any school-related tasks if desired. However, it is mandatory for staff to ensure that the Aladdin App is never left open on their mobile devices. All staff members using Aladdin are obligated to always maintain data security.
3. Staff should be aware that unauthorised recordings of school business is strictly prohibited. This encompasses all meetings and events. If there is a necessity to record a meeting, all attendees must consent to the recording beforehand. Any unauthorised recordings of meetings will be treated as a breach of disciplinary procedures.
4. When staff use devices to record audio, images, or videos related to school activities or events, they must upload the content to our secure school platform after the event and delete the content from the device used.
5. Typically, personal calls should be made outside of school hours. However, in urgent situations, staff members should exercise discretion when making calls, ensuring where applicable, that their classroom or the child they are assisting is supervised during the call. Incoming personal calls should be limited to urgent matters.
6. Mobile devices must not be utilised for recreational activities while on school premises or during school hours.

Parents/Guardians, Visitors

1. Parents/Guardians and visitors must not use devices to record audio, images or video unless specifically permitted by the school.
2. Meetings with staff, parents or visitors cannot be recorded due to GDPR and confidentiality reasons.
3. Mobile devices must always be turned off at parent/teacher meetings.

4. Parents/Guardians and visitors are equally responsible for maintaining child protection standards when it comes to capturing images or videos of children within the school. They must refrain from sharing any school-related media, including photographs, videos or recordings of children, on their personal social media platforms unless explicitly authorised by both the school and all individuals depicted in the content.

Policy Breach Investigation Rights

We reserve the right to investigate any breach of our electronic device policy concerning child safeguarding, child privacy, staff privacy, and dignity at work.

The Personal Electronic Device Policy is readily accessible to parents on request and is also published on the school website – www.conaires.ie

Policy Review

This policy was ratified on the 17th of June 2024 and will be reviewed periodically.

Signed: David Hogan, Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: Peter Walsh, Principal Teacher