



## Mobile Phone and Personal Digital Devices Policy

### National Context

Mobile technology is an integral part of the lives of children and young people and families across Scotland. Data shows that 62% of 8-11-year-olds in Scotland own their own mobile phone, rising to 96% for 12-15 year olds. Many pupils bring their own personal mobile devices into school.

Used responsibly, mobile devices such as phones, watches and tablets can be powerful tools to enhance learning and teaching, communication and social experiences, and may remove barriers to learning for some pupils. In addition, they can bring a sense of security to parents and carers as their children enjoy more independent activities such as walking to and from school.

However, pupils bringing their own mobile devices into schools can also create challenges. It is evident that mobile devices, when used inappropriately, are causing disruption to pupils' learning and that of their peers.

Using a mobile device in the school environment may be intrusive and may provide opportunities for inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour (e.g. bullying or taking unauthorised photographs). There are some situations and environments where mobile devices are not allowed, such as hospitals, aeroplanes and whilst driving etc, so children have to learn to use them responsibly. Children must also be aware that inappropriate use of mobile devices may, in fact, also be breaking the law<sup>1</sup> (Appendix 1)

Following the requirement of the Minister for Education that all schools develop a policy on the use of mobile devices in school, this policy is designed to clarify the school's position on the bringing of and use of mobile devices.

### Rights Respecting

The Scottish Ministers have made a clear commitment to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights in Scotland, by incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law. Considering the UNCRC requirements in the context of mobile devices, any decisions relating to the use of such devices in schools should be made acting in the best interests of the child and considering their views.

There is also legislation, which protects the rights of school staff in relation to their employment, health etc. The Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) recognises that protecting the wellbeing of staff and pupils is essential for creating the right environment for effective learning and teaching through the Curriculum. Accordingly, it is necessary to recognise and respect all such rights, equally.

### Dalmellington Context

We recognise that pupils may require a mobile phone at school to support with travelling to and from school. There is no requirement to use personal devices to support learning and teaching in any of our classes. We have a selection of iPads, laptops, Chromebooks and interactive boards for use during class to support and enhance learning experiences. We support the delivery of experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence through focussed lessons and assemblies which are supported by our Campus Police Officer, on internet safety and digital literacy to ensure our pupils are equipped with the skills to conduct themselves positively online as well as in person.

## **Responsibilities**

At all times the responsibility for the use and security of any mobile device brought to school lies with the child it belongs to. The school will not accept responsibility for any loss, theft of or damage to mobile phones or any other personal digital device, including smart watches.

## **Digital etiquette (standards of conduct when using mobile devices)**

- Mobile phones should be switched off and out of sight during the school day, including before 9am in the playground. All mobile phones must be stored within pupil school bags and not accessed during the school day, including within classrooms, in the playground, toilets, corridors and dinner hall.
- Watches with a phone or photography option should be programmed to ensure these tools are not functional during the period of 9am - 3pm.
- All communication must take place via the school office. The school will not ask a child to contact their parent/carer from their own device. Staff will contact parents/carers directly. Parents/carers should contact the school office to deliver a message during the school day.

The following statements include the school grounds and also apply during the use of school transport:

- Phones must not be used to bully, harass or intimidate other pupils or staff at any time. Our 'Respect Me' policy and procedures will be followed in this instance.
- Mobile phones/watches must not be used to take photographs, audio or video recordings of any other child or member of staff. (appendix 1) **This includes parent/carer use of mobile phones/watches/digital devices during school events and performances.**
- Pupils must not download inappropriate or unsuitable material to their phones at anytime. (appendix 1)
- Unsuitable materials of any kind obtained or produced anywhere, must not be shown or shared on school premises.

## **Breach of digital etiquette**

1. Any phone/device found on display, or switched on, will be handed in to school management, who will store them securely return them at the end of the school day.
2. Any pupil using a phone/device to photograph or record any other pupil or member of staff will be disciplined following school policy and the phone stored securely by management until the end of the school day. Where appropriate the parent/carer will be contacted and asked to collect it.
3. Any pupil found to be using a mobile phone/device to bully or harass others will be disciplined in line with our Respect Me policy and, if applicable, reported to the police.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Legal Implications of mobile phones**

- Abusive language or images, used to bully, harass or threaten another, whether spoken or written, may be defamatory, may contravene **The Protection from Harassment Act 1977** or **The Communications Act 2003**
- It is an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network a message that was grossly offensive, or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character (**Section 127 , the Communications Act 2003**)
- It is also an offence to make use of public electronic communications network for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety (**Section 127 , the Communications Act 2003**)

- It is an offence to take, download or possess any indecent image of a child ( under the age of 18 ) ( Section 52 and 52A of the **Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982** )

The recent Scottish Government document 'Mobile phones: guidance for Scotland's schools (August 2024) gives a national context and is available from

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/mobile-phone-guidance-scotlands-schools/>