

MOBILE PHONE / ELECTRICAL DEVICE POLICY



BALBRIGGAN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Principal: Mr Emmet Sheridan

Introduction

The possession and use of mobile phones/ electronic devices by school students is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Use of mobile phones (particularly with the advent of sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including:

Mobile phones/electronic devices can be valuable items and might render a student vulnerable to theft.

Mobile phones/ electronic devices (and their cost and level of sophistication – or otherwise) can make students objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying.

Even when apparently silent, the use of mobile phones/electronic devices for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline.

Use of phones /devices with integrated cameras, sound recording facilities and internet access could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images and audio recordings.

Students using mobile phones/electronic devices to cheat in exams.

Students using vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using mobile phones.

Students using mobile phones/electronic devices to menace, harass or offend another person. Students engaging in personal attacks, harassment of another person by posting private information about another person using electronic messages, taking/sending photos, video recording, audio recordings or objectionable images or video recordings, and phone calls (all criminal offenses).

Students posting images, video recordings, audio recordings of other students, staff members, school activities and facilities on the internet.

Students using mobile phones/electronic devices to bully others in the school community.

Privacy concerns mainly related to the ability of many phones to take photographs, make video recordings or record conversations in the ignorance of those being recorded.

Disruption to lessons through the receipt and transmission of SMS, and other media messages, telephone ring tones sounding, phone alarms sounding.

School Management is therefore proposing a policy which prohibits the use by students of mobile phones while on school premises; and unauthorized use of phones while on off-site activities. It is not regarded as realistic to have a policy which prohibits students from taking phones to school. Not only would it be impractical to forbid students' from carrying them when the latest phones are so slim that they could be hidden easily, but it is believed that a number of parents would be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child were not allowed to

carry a phone at all and might therefore be unable to contact their parents in respect of any situation that might arise.

Policy for student use of mobile phones

1 Scope

The Acceptable use policy for students carrying mobile phones while in the school and while on the school grounds also applies to students during or on school excursions and extra-curricular activities.

2 Rationale

2.1. Personal Safety and Security

Balbriggan CC accepts that parents give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also ever-increasing concern about children commuting to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can speak to their child quickly at any time.

2.2 Responsibility

It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones onto the school premises to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this document.

The decision to provide a mobile phone/electronic device to their children is made by parents / guardians and as such they should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone onto school premises.

Students who have a mobile phone/electronic device at school while under the school's supervision do so according to this policy

2.3 Unacceptable Use

Mobile phones are required to be switched off while the student is on school property during term time and during state exam times. There will be no exceptions to this part of the policy. Students are responsible for any mobile phones/electronic devices which they are in possession of.

2.4 Theft or damage

Students are required to mark all their mobile phone /electronic devices clearly with their names. In order to reduce the risk of theft during the school hours, students who carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed and not advertise that they have them.

Students who bring a mobile phone /electronic devices onto school premises must have them in their school bags as soon as they arrive.

Mobile phones/electronic devices which are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed into the school office.

The school accepts no responsibility for replacing mobile phones /electronic devices that are lost, stolen or damaged whilst on the school premises or on school sponsored functions.

The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones/electronic devices stolen while travelling to and from school.

2.5 Inappropriate conduct and Sanctions

- (a) Any student whose phone/device is seen by a staff member, whether or not the phone/device is switched on will have their phone/device including sim cards confiscated. It will be kept in a secure place within the school. The phone /device will be returned one week later and only to a parent. Students and parents/guardians are reminded that confiscation of a phone/device may result in very serious inconvenience for the student and parents/guardians. Failure to hand up a phone/electronic device for confiscation when asked by a staff member to do so will be treated as a serious offence.
- (b) Any students caught using a mobile phone/electronic device during Balbriggan CC school exams or during Certificate examinations or assessments will face disciplinary actions.
- (c) It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/electronic device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the Principal is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardai. Students with mobile phones/electronic devices must not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person, via SMS messages/chat rooms/ social networking sites, taking/sending/uploading photos, phone calls. Circulating objectionable images will also be treated as a serious disciplinary issue. The recording of another person without their knowledge may result in disciplinary action. The recording of another person without their knowledge will result in disciplinary action. Failure to comply with the rules of this policy will result in Suspension and/or referral to the board of management.

Note:

Parents and Guardians are reminded that in case of emergency ,the school office remains the only acceptable point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly . (School Phone 01 8412388)

Also any student, who is feeling unwell at school and needs to go home, must arrange this through the main office. Under no circumstance should students use their mobile phone to contact home and make arrangements to leave except through the front office.

3 Use of mobile phones/electronic devices on out-of-school activities.

3.1 Phones may only be used in a manner which has been permitted by the teacher in charge.