

BLESSINGTON EDUCATE
TOGETHER NATIONAL
SCHOOL

**PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES:
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

Ratified by Board of Management on:	
Signed:	
Date:	
Chairperson, Board of Management	

CONTENTS

1.0	RATIONALE	3
2.0	AIMS	3
3.0	RESPONSIBILITIES.....	3
3.1	PARENTS/GUARDIANS	3
3.2	PUPILS	3
3.3	STAFF	3
4.0	GENERAL GUIDELINES	4
5.0	STAFF GUIDELINES	4
6.0	PUPIL GUIDELINES	4
7.0	SANCTIONS.....	5

1.0 RATIONALE

For purposes of this policy, ‘personal electronic device’ means any device that a pupil is in possession of which electronically communicates, sends, receives, stores, reproduces or displays voice and/or text communication or data. These include, but are not limited to mobile or smart phones (hereafter referred to as mobile phones), music and media players, gaming devices and tablets.

The Board of Management of Blessington Educate Together National School (BETNS) recognises that many pupils and their families own mobile phones. BETNS also recognises that parents/guardians may request that their child bring a mobile phone to school for before and after school safety/security reasons.

The use of mobile phones (and also an increasing number of personal electronic devices) with integrated cameras may lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture and the use or distribution of images. They can be very intrusive, distracting and anti-social in a school environment as the business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions and disruptions. Therefore the school strongly discourages the bringing of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices to school by pupils. BETNS is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but only within the parameters of this policy.

2.0 AIMS

To inform all members of the school community regarding the appropriate use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices in the school.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- To discourage the bringing of personal electronic devices to school.
- If required, to obtain permission from the Board of Management for their child to carry a mobile phone whilst at school.
- To ensure phones have passwords/PIN numbers to protect unauthorised use.
- To discuss the appropriate use of mobile phones with their child.

3.2 PUPILS

- To abide by the guidelines listed below.

3.3 STAFF

- To abide by the guidelines listed below.

4.0 GENERAL GUIDELINES

- The use of mobile phones in school is discouraged for both teachers and pupils.
- Where a parent feels that a child requires the use of a phone for before and after school safety/security reasons permission must be sought from the school. The attached form must be completed and returned to the school for consideration.
- The use of personal electronic devices is not permitted during the school day (including arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal).

5.0 STAFF GUIDELINES

- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discreet' mode.
- Except in urgent or exceptional situations, mobile phone use is not permitted.

6.0 PUPIL GUIDELINES

- Pupils are not permitted to have a mobile phone in school unless there are special circumstances and a parent has received permission from the Board of Management.
- Where a pupil brings a mobile phone to school, the phone must be kept out of sight, switched off during the school day and may not be used, for any purpose, on school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as school swimming or sports activities). The only exception to this is in an emergency or with the approval of a teacher. Children are permitted if necessary to use the office phone.
- Where a pupil brings other personal electronic devices to school, it must be kept out of sight, switched off during the school day and may not be used, for any purpose, on school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as school swimming or sports activities).
- It is strongly advised that pupils use passwords/PIN numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls or texts cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other pupils, or if stolen). Pupils must keep their passwords/PIN numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords should not be shared.
- Pupils who ignore this policy and use a mobile or other personal electronic device on school premises without permission will be required to hand over their phone/device to a member of staff and parents will be asked to collect it from the principal.
- If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone or other personal electronic device of either pupils or teachers, this will be regarded as a serious offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the 'Code of Behaviour'. If images of pupils or teachers have been taken, the phone/device will not be returned to the pupil until the images have been deleted by the pupil in the presence of the principal (or designate) and the Child's parent/guardian.

- If a teacher has any suspicion that a mobile phone/device has unsuitable material stored on it, pupils will be required to hand over the phone to a teacher and parents/guardians will be asked to collect it from the school. Where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile/device may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the Gardaí for further investigation. Parents/guardians will be informed in such circumstances.
- Any breaches of this policy will be dealt with according to the ‘Code of Behaviour’.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged personal electronic devices. The safety and security of personal electronic devices is wholly a matter for the pupil and parents/guardians.
- The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their personal electronic devices stolen while travelling to and from school.
- Pupils using personal electronic devices to bully other pupils or send offensive messages/calls will face disciplinary actions as per the schools ‘Code of Behaviour’.
- It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a personal electronic devices 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.

7.0 SANCTIONS

- Confiscation of the personal electronic devices. The personal electronic devices can be collected from the principal and returned to the parent/guardian (not the pupil) at the end of the day.
- A time-out or in school suspension.
- Communication with the parents/guardians regarding personal electronic devices use at school.
- If the use of personal electronic devices is a continued problem the pupil will be banned from bringing personal electronic devices to school for the rest of the school year.

Appendix A

REQUEST TO BRING A MOBILE PHONE TO SCHOOL

Please review the attached 'Mobile phone policy', sign and return this permission form to the principal.

School name: BLESSINGTON EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL

Name of Pupil: _____

Class / Year: _____

Please allow my child to bring a mobile phone to school because (give reason):

Mobile phone number of the phone is: _____

My child and I understand that:

- The mobile phone must be turned off from 9:00 am to 2:40 pm
- The mobile phone must be kept in the Childs school bag during the school day.
- If the mobile phone causes a disruption, it will be taken from the child and returned to the parent/guardian in person at the end of the school day.
- If the mobile phone is a continued problem, the child will not be allowed to bring the mobile phone to school for the rest of the school year.
- Blessington Educate Together National School assume no responsibility for the safe keeping of the mobile phone.

Parent/Guardian signature

Date

For Office use only:

For School Year:

Approved

Not approved / Permission withdrawn because _____

Principal Signature

Date