

Scoil Ruáin



Mobile Phone Policy



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CORE VALUES STATEMENT

Scoil Ruáin is a co-educational, multi-denominational ETB school that is underpinned by the core values of excellence in education, care, equality, community, and respect. At Scoil Ruáin, we work hard to give every student an equal chance to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities, to prepare our students to be open-minded and responsible citizens with a strong sense of our core values. Everyone in our school community is treated equally in all aspects of school life. Our aim is to provide an inclusive education that acknowledges the variety of identities, viewpoints, and values that students, parents and staff members have.

SCOIL RUÁIN ETHOS

Scoil Ruáin is a state, co-educational, multi-denominational school underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education
- Care
- Equality
- Community
- Respect

DEIS STATUS

Scoil Ruáin is a DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) school. DEIS is a national programme aimed at addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities. This means the school delivers a range of supplementary resources including additional staffing, funding, access to literacy and numeracy programmes, and the Home School Community Liaison Scheme and School Completion Programme. Furthermore, Scoil Ruáin offers practical supports such as the School Meals and Book Rental schemes. An evidence based DEIS plan underpins all teaching and learning in the school.

TIPPERARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

The Scoil Ruáin Mobile Phone Policy reflects the Mission Statement of our Patron, Tipperary Education and Training Board (TETB), which endeavours to provide “a quality education and training service, which creates diverse opportunities enabling learners and communities to unlock their potential.” (Statement of Strategy 2018-2020).

CONSULTATION

The following were consulted at the review stage of this policy:

- School senior and middle management
- Teaching Staff
- Students

- Parents
- BOM

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Mobile Phone Policy is developed in line with legislative requirements –

- Data Protection Act 2018- this act gives effect to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) May 2018 in the Irish context.
- Data Protection Act 1998 - this act was passed to deal with privacy issues arising from the increasing amount of information kept on a computer about individuals.
- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 - this amendment extends the data protection rules to manually held records and makes improvements to the public’s right to access data.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 - this act legislates against anyone who knowingly produces, prints, publishes, distributes, exports, imports, shows, possesses, or sells child pornography.
- Interception Act 1993 – this act stipulates that telecommunication messages can be intercepted for the purpose of an investigation of a serious offence. Authorisations are subject to certain conditions.
- Video Recordings Act 1989 - this act prohibits the distribution of videos which contain obscene or indecent material which may lead to the depravation or corruption of the viewer.
- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000 – this act governs copyright in Ireland.

Other relevant legislation may include:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- Dignity at Work Charter (2007)
- Children First Act (2015)

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies, and in particular with:

- Code of Behaviour
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- DEIS Plan
- Child Protection Policy
- Whole School Guidance Policy
- School Trips Policy
- Scoil Ruáin COVID-19 Response Plan 2021-22*

RATIONALE FOR MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Scoil Ruáin has developed this mobile policy in line our core value of excellence in education, respect, and community in particular. The aim of the policy is to ensure appropriate access to beneficial technology, and to balance this against the rights of students and staff to privacy, respect, communications and safety. This policy is to be implemented in conjunction with the AUP.

TERMS OF USE

Having consulted with parents, staff, students and the BOM the following were agreed as acceptable terms of use for mobile phones:

1. Students are permitted to have their mobile phone in school but it must be turned off and kept out of sight during the school day. This applies before school starts, during lessons, between lessons, at breaks and while leaving the school premises.

(While Scoil Ruáin is permitting students to bring mobile phones to school, it should be noted that Scoil Ruain accepts absolutely NO RESPONSIBILITY for loss or damage to phones. Students are responsible for minding their own property.)

2. The only exception to rule 1 above is when a teacher allows students access to their phones for educational purposes. Once this has concluded the phone must be switched off and put away.
3. Rule 1 also applies on school trips except with the explicit permission of a teacher. (Refer to the School Trips Policy for more detailed guidance).
4. Students will not attempt to access any social networking sites while in school or during school hours. Student access to these sites is prohibited during the above times. This access restriction also applies to any new social networking sites which may arise before the date of the next review of this policy. Social networking sites e.g., Facebook, Snapchat etc, are prevented for access under the school's internet filtering software.
5. Parents must not contact their child by mobile phone during the school day under any circumstances. Similarly, students must not contact their parents by mobile phone during the school day. All communication must be via the school office. Any messages for a child or parent will be relayed by the office.
(During the consultation phase a substantial majority of parents indicated that communication should take place via the office. Rule 5 gives effect to this opinion.)
6. In line with the State Examinations Commission policy, all mobile phones must be surrendered to the exam superintendent for the duration of each mock JC, LC and LCA examination.

SANCTIONS

Any breach of the above rules will result in the confiscation of the student's phone. The phone can be collected at the office at the end of the school day by the student.

Students need to be aware that refusal to surrender their phone when asked is considered a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour. Teachers will report this to the relevant Year Head who will recommend an automatic one-day suspension, as per the code of behaviour.

Repeated breaches of the mobile phone policy will result in further disciplinary sanctions under the Code of Behaviour.

SERIOUS BREACHES

Circulating, publishing, or distributing on the internet, material associated with School activities, including, but not limited to, material in relation to staff and students, where such circulation undermines, humiliates, or causes damage to the school or another person, is considered a serious breach of School discipline. It is essential in such situations that the staff member, student and/or their parents contact the school Principal at the earliest opportunity, so that

the matter can be addressed. The school can offer advice to students on appropriate ways in dealing with upsetting online material.

The following uses of the mobile phone are considered serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour:

- Photography, audio or video recording (and sharing) of any member of the school community without their consent.
- Photography, audio or video recording (and/or sharing) of any activity or incident in the school without the specific permission of school management.
- Any use of a mobile device that interferes with teaching and learning.
- Any other use of the phone that makes any member of the school community feel disrespected and/or unsafe.
- This list is not exhaustive.

Staff and students are advised that the use of their own devices in school is governed by this policy. In addition, the unauthorised connection of personally owned devices to the school network is strictly prohibited, unless authorised by management. Unregistered devices may be confiscated. Any attempt to access the network from a smartphone or digital device without authorisation will be deemed a violation of this policy. Lack of knowledge of the regulations associated with this policy is not acceptable as an excuse or defence, and each student is responsible for their phone usage while in school.