



## **SCHOOL POLICY REGARDING MOBILE PHONES / DEVICES**

### **Introduction**

There is an ever-increasing need for clear supervision and control in relation to the use of mobile phones and all other electronic recording devices, by our young people, both at home and at school. The advances in the technology of mobile phones bring with them added dangers relating to the misuse of this technology. Text messaging can become a simply executed but potentially very serious form of bullying. Use of phones for photography creates other potential dangers, leading to a breach of privacy or, at worst, a possible medium for abuse.

This policy relates to all electronic devices that can be used for recording purposes or that can connect to the Internet e.g. iPad, Tablet.

### **Rationale**

The Board of Management of the school recognises that there may be occasions when Parents may wish to have mobile phone contact with their children after school hours. It therefore acknowledges that a total ban on the possession of a mobile phone at school is not practical. However:

- There should be **no necessity for the phone to be switched on at school.**
- Under no circumstances should the phone be used during school activities (including the camera facility), unless specifically granted permission by a teacher.
- Should the need arise, the school secretary will make emergency or other calls.
- Parents with an urgent need to contact their daughter should contact the school office.

### **Aims**

- To provide a safe school environment.
- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning and
- To decrease the opportunity to conduct bullying in any form.

### **School Procedures**

The Board of Management has specified the following regulations and will treat seriously any breaches. The school accepts no responsibility for lost/stolen/broken mobile phones or devices.

Pupils are **not permitted to have mobile phones switched on or to use them in any way on the school premises (i.e. inside the school gate)** during the school day, unless specifically granted permission by a teacher.

- If any pupil needs to have a mobile phone in school with her, it must remain in her schoolbag. It must not be in a pocket or taken out in the classroom or on the school premises, unless the pupil is given permission by a teacher.
- If photo(s)/video that are taken during the school day without permission are uploaded to social media, the phone/device will be confiscated and the matter brought to the attention of the BOM with a view to suspension and possible expulsion following investigation. The pupil will be held responsible for any content on **their** phone/device.
- Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones on tours unless specifically granted permission by the teacher to use the camera or recording facility on the phone. These photos/recordings are to be used responsibly and parents should monitor their distribution at home.
- Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the school secretary using the school landline phone.
- The use of all electronic devices is banned, including during after-school activities, unless they are to be used to enhance the learning opportunities of the pupils and are used under the strict supervision of the class teacher.
- Staff have access to the school landline if calls need to be made to parents.

## Sanctions

Should the policy be breached, one or more of the following sanctions will be implemented (these are not given in a specific order.):

- If a pupil is found with a mobile phone, other than in her schoolbag, it will be confiscated by the Teacher / Principal. When confiscated, it may only be retrieved from the Principal by the child's parent/guardian.
- If a pupil is found to have used her phone during school time for texting/photo/video the phone will be confiscated by the Principal and her parents/guardian contacted. The phone may be required to be handed in on a daily basis to the Principal's office for a period of one week minimum. The pupil may face suspension for continued breaches of the requirements.
- **If a pupil is found to have photographed/recorded/videoed without permission, a fellow pupil(s), teacher, SNA or other adult working in the school either on school premises or while on a school excursion, then that pupil risks immediate suspension.**
- Verbal reprimand.
- Written apology from the pupil.
- Withdrawal from a particular lesson or activity.
- Offending items will need to be deleted from devices or removed from relevant sites where they may have been posted.
- Privilege of being allowed to have a mobile phone in school will be removed and a ban imposed on the pupil having a mobile phone on the school premises.
- Matter will be brought to the attention of the BOM for investigation and action.
- Possible suspension or expulsion.
- Possible liaising with Gardaí.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff and parents share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy. This policy has been drawn up in an effort to keep our school community safe, therefore we ask all parents to support us in implementing it.

**Additional related policies available on the school website**  
[www.belgroveseniorgirls.ie](http://www.belgroveseniorgirls.ie)

- Anti-Bullying Policy
  - *Please note: “However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour”.*
- Code of Behaviour

## **Guidelines for parents/guardians**

Parents are the primary educators of their children. You as parents / guardians have responsibilities to ensure your daughter uses her phone/ device appropriately:

- While in school, pupils are expected to comply with our school mobile phone/devices policy.
- Remind the girls “Give respect / get respect”.
- How you behave with regards to social media / group chats can influence your daughter’s behaviour.
- Be aware of what your daughter uses her phone for.
- Educate yourself regarding apps your daughter is using and the content that she is accessing online, technology is constantly changing. Be aware of what each app or site contains before allowing its use by your daughter.
- Regularly monitor your daughter’s access to the internet.
- Avoid your daughter having access to her phone at night or when going to bed and permit this only if absolutely necessary.
- Advise your daughter of the dangers of sharing her password with friends. Teach her not to share information that can be misused.
- Encourage your daughter:
  - To conduct themselves with respect online.
  - Not to forward inappropriate pictures or texts.
  - To talk to you if they receive a message that worries them.
  - To think before they share/ like/ tweet/ blog or post. Would they post it in front of the whole school or at home?
  - Not to troll.
  - To treat their online world the same as their real world.
- See [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) for further guidance.

*Please sign and return the attached slip to your daughter’s Class Teacher.*

Bealtaine / May 2017