

LISNAGARVEY HIGH SCHOOL MOBILE PHONE POLICY 2016

Rationale

This policy sets out the School's framework governing what is deemed to be acceptable use of mobile phones. The purpose of this policy is to prevent unacceptable use of mobile phones or camera-phones by students, and thereby to protect the School's staff and students from undesirable materials, filming, intimidation or harassment.

Mobile phones are now a feature of modern society and most of our pupils own one. Increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology presents a number of issues for schools:

- The high monetary value of many phones.
- The integration of cameras into phones leading to potential child protection and data protection issues.
- The potential to use the phone e.g. for texting whilst on silent mode can undermine classroom discipline.
- Their use can render pupils subject to potential cyber bullying.

It is not realistic to prohibit phones being brought to school, nor is it logistically possible for schools to collect phones in each morning and return them in the afternoon. It is our policy to allow pupils to have a mobile phone with them in school, although under new Child Protection Guidelines the following conditions apply.

Policy

1. Mobile phones must not be used whilst on the school's premises.
2. The school understands a parent's wish for their child to have a phone for their journey to and from school for safety reasons. However, parents and students should understand that this is entirely at their own risk as the school accepts no responsibility for loss, theft or damage of any phone or device brought into school.
3. Mobile phones that are brought into school should be stored (in lockers or bags) turned off (not on silent) and out of sight. Any student using their phone will have their mobile phone confiscated; use in this case will be determined by the phone being seen.
4. It is forbidden to record photographic images (still or video) or sound recordings of staff or students without their explicit permission or to post any images taken in the course of the school day without explicit permission.
5. Any student caught filming another person (and/or uploading images or video onto the Internet) will have their phone confiscated. It will be treated as a disciplinary matter and their parents may be informed. If the action is repeated, flagrant or of a serious nature, the matter will be treated as a serious disciplinary issue.
6. Under no circumstances should mobile phones be taken into any external or internal examination. This includes those that are turned off within a bag or coat. Any student who is found in possession of a mobile phone will be reported to the appropriate examining body. This may result in the examining body seeking the student's withdrawal from either that examination or all examinations.
7. If a child refuses to hand over their phone, this must be reported immediately to their Year Head, the Head of Junior/Senior School or the Vice Principal and the pupil will be disciplined under normal procedures for refusal to comply with a reasonable request.
8. Effectively this policy determines the use of mobile phones to be 'not seen or heard' during the school day.
9. Failure to comply with these rules could result in the phone being confiscated and held in the General Office until it can be collected by a parent/guardian at the end of the school day.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's other policies in particular the Disciplinary Policy for Students.

Exceptional Circumstances Permitting the Use of Mobile Phones

Lisnagarvey High School recognises the technological resources that a mobile phone provides and the educational value for academic purposes, yet the use of such resources must be restricted and is at the discretion of individual teaching staff.

Emergencies

Communications between parents and students during the school day should only occur through the School's official communication channels and not via a student mobile phone.

If a pupil needs to contact his/her parents/guardians they should refer the matter to their Year Head who in turn will contact the pupil's home via the General Office. Pupils are not permitted to contact home directly using their mobile phones. If mobile phones are used in this way, the phone will be confiscated.

Parents wishing to contact a pupil in an emergency must always contact the General Office and not the pupil directly. Their message will be relayed promptly.

Responsibility for Mobile Phones

School accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones or other devices brought into school. It is the responsibility of staff, parents and pupils to ensure mobile phones are properly insured.