



Lisnagarvey High School
Circular No

LISNAGARVEY HIGH SCHOOL
MOBILE PHONE & HANDHELD DEVICES
POLICY & PROCEDURES

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May 2024

Rationale

Communications technology is developing very rapidly, and most young people now have their own mobile phone. At Lisnagarvey High School, we recognise this and work with pupils to use the technology to the advantage of all, in a responsible and appropriate way. Increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology presents numerous issues for schools:

- The high monetary value of many phones and they are potential targets for theft.
- The integration of cameras into phones/devices 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 bullying. Mobiles can be misused to bully, humiliate, harass, film violent incidents. In some cases, it has also been known for them to be used for inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons.

Although we strongly discourage pupils from bringing mobile phones into school, we recognise that many parents/guardians would be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child was not allowed to carry a phone and may therefore not be able to contact them in respect of any situation that might arise.

Where they are brought into school, the following policy will be rigorously enforced. In this policy, the use of the term mobile phones will relate to all technology that allows connection to mobile or WiFi networks. School devices are excluded.

Objectives

- To continue to allow pupils to use mobile phones on their journey to and from school.
- To allow teaching and learning in the classroom to take place undisturbed by mobile phones.
- To make it clear to pupils that the presence of mobile phones is not permitted in public examinations.
- To allow pupils to be safe from the effects of mobile phone use, cyber bullying and to protect all members of the school from the negative use of hand-held electronic devices.
- To ensure that 'Bluetooth' technology is not used to compromise the safety, security, or privacy of others.
- To make pupils and parents/guardians aware of the school's position on hand-held electronic devices and the consequences of their use/misuse.

Policy & Guidelines

1. Mobile phones may only be used before school starts at 8.50am and after school at 3.30pm, Wednesday after 2.55pm and Friday after 1.45pm.
2. Mobile phones must be switched off (not on silent mode) and kept out of view, (in the inside pocket of the blazer) when on the school grounds i.e. on entering the school premises and buildings and must not be switched on again until the pupils leave the premises. Even when apparently silent, using mobile phones for any purpose could be potentially undermining classroom discipline and/or interfere with electronic equipment, so is not permitted.
3. Mobile phones should also remain switched off during off site school activities i.e. field trips, sporting activities etc. The only exception to this would be in an emergency and/or with the approval of a member of the school staff.
4. The use of camera phones is not permitted on school property. Hand-held electronic devices with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to the inappropriate taking, use or distribution of images. These should not be used to take pictures or videos of anyone in school or on school trips unless with the agreement of staff and the pupils concerned.
5. Parental consent for taking, distribution and usage of photographs (e.g. on the school's Facebook/Website/Prospectus) can be given when completing the school's data return forms.
6. Phones must not be taken into examinations. Special care should be taken to double check that phones are not switched on in examination rooms during external or internal exams.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's other policies, particularly the Behaviour Policy for Students.

Examples of Hand-Held & Other Devices Covered by this Policy

Mobile Phones, Smart Phones and Smart Watches - Whilst these are mainly used for texting and voice calls, many phones enable the user to take photographs and video, listen to music, to play games, to communicate via Bluetooth, access the web and the wide variety of apps including social media.

Games Consoles - Solely for playing games but some now have photographic capability and internet access.

Air Pods/Ear Buds – These are not allowed in school, due to the distracting nature to students who need to focus on school assignments and listen to the teachers for instructions in a class. They also may diminish a student's understanding of the material being taught.

Emergencies

Mobile phones must not be used to make emergency contact to and from parents/guardians. If a parent/guardian urgently needs to contact a pupil, they should phone the school office and the message will be forwarded to the pupil.

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 who feel unwell must not use mobile phones to contact home or parents directly. Instead, they should report to the General Office with an 'Orange Illness Slip' issued by a member of staff.

Students MUST hand over their mobile phone to the General Office whilst awaiting to be collected. They can collect their mobile phone once they have signed out or return to class.

When a parent arrives to collect their child from school (for whatever reason), the office staff will either send an email to that specific member of staff or will send a member of office staff to collect their child from class.

Sanctions

1. Failure to comply with school rules could result in a phone being confiscated and held in the General Office until it can be collected by a parent/guardian.
2. 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.
3. Pupils sending threatening or unwanted texts/calls to others may have their phone confiscated. Parents/guardians may be informed of the matter, and it may be reported to the PSNI. Where threats are made to those not attending Lisnagarvey High School, then the parents/guardians will be advised to contact the PSNI.
4. Pupils using any hand-held electronic device to take pictures/video images or forward pictures/video images to others, including the internet, will have their hand-held electronic device confiscated. Parents/guardians may be informed of the matter, and it may be reported to the PSNI. Where these are of pupils not attending Lisnagarvey High School, then the parents/guardians will be advised to contact the PSNI.
5. Pupils found to have their mobile phone switched on in an exam room will automatically be disqualified from the examination (by the Examinations Council in the case of an external exam).
6. If a pupil persistently uses a hand-held electronic device in such a way that contravenes this policy, then their privilege to have the device in school will be withdrawn indefinitely.
7. Disciplinary action, up to and including the possible suspension or expulsion of the pupil concerned, will be considered for more serious issues.
8. Pupils who contact parents directly when in school will be issued a Whole School Detention by their Head of Year for breach of school rules.

Advice on Safe and Responsible Use of Mobile Phones

- Do not give out your number or friends' numbers to people you don't know.
- Keep your PIN number or security code private.
- If you get a text/image or social media message/image which upsets you, do not reply but keep a record and tell a responsible adult. In serious cases it can be reported to the PSNI.
- If you receive a rude or embarrassing text/image or social media message/image about someone, don't forward it to others but do tell a responsible adult.
- Distributing sexual images of other young people is harassment and is illegal. If you receive something like this, tell a responsible adult immediately. Having such images on your device is illegal, whether you send or receive them.
- Out of school, ask permission before taking an image/video of your friends and think carefully before sending it on via phone or web. Once sent, you have lost control of it, it could become public before you know it and may be used in an inappropriate way.
- Use wall messaging responsibly and do not post things on your status for everyone to see that you may later regret.
- See www.kidsmart.org.uk for more information on staying safe.

Responsibility for Mobile Phones

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

Pupils shall not use any digital device or camera facilities (including dictaphones) to take or distribute pictures, videos or recordings of pupils or staff without their permission (distribution can be as small as emailing/texting to one other person or as large as posting image or video online).

