



**M A L A H I D E
P O R T M A R N O C K**
Educate Together
National School

Personal Digital Device Policy

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A. Introductory Statement and Rationale

Introductory Statement

This policy outlines the appropriate use of personal electronic devices (including but not limited to mobile phones, tablets, smart watches and wearable devices) in our school. The use of such devices is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. This policy will address all guidelines, responsibilities and sanctions associated with possession of and use of personal electronic devices in Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together National School. This Policy will be revised regularly and as necessary, taking into account any issues raised by parties affected by the Policy (including, Staff, Board of Management, Parents) and any changes in ICT circumstances.

Rationale

Our core responsibility of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore the school strongly discourages the bringing of personal electronic devices to school by students.

B. Relationship to School Ethos

The provision of a safe and secure school environment, ensuring that the dignity of both children and adults is respected and the creation of an atmosphere conducive to learning are all central to the mission of Malahide/Portmarnock ETNS. The misuse of personal electronic devices is not compatible with these goals or the general school ethos.

C. Aim of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of personal electronic devices at our school and to outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

D. School Procedures

1. The use of mobile phones, tablets, smart watches, wearable technology or similar devices by children who attend the school is not allowed while the children are in the care of the school staff, while at school, on trips from the school or involved in extra-curricular activities.
2. Devices that are found in the school must be handed to the School Office.
3. Children who need to contact home during school hours may use the school office phone, under the supervision of a member of staff.
4. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the School Office remains the first point of contact and can ensure that your child is reached quickly and a message passed onto them.

5. The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their devices stolen on the way to or from school or for replacing lost, stolen or damaged devices while in the care of the school.

E. Guidelines for Children

As a general rule, pupils should not bring personal electronic devices to school. With the exception of school-resourced assistive technology, the use of personal devices (including but not limited to; smartphones, smart watches and wearable technology) with microphones, cameras or any other similar recording capabilities is not permitted on school grounds.

We do accept that in some circumstances parents may require their child to bring a mobile phone (or similar device) to school. Parents must send the Principal a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring their device to school each school term. The letter should be addressed to the Principal. This letter will be kept on file.

Where a pupil brings a device to school, it must be:

- Clearly labeled with the pupil's name
- Fully turned off at the school gate, before entering school grounds
- Handed to the teacher at the beginning of the day or of the activity and will be returned before the child leaves.
- Switched off until the pupil is outside the school gate after the school day

The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged devices.

F. Guidelines for Parents

- When visiting the school, parents are asked to be mindful if taking photos or videos-and not to share images of other children through email, social media or through any online communication platform.
- Parents are obliged to ensure that the school has their correct contact details. Any updates are to be emailed to the school.

G. Guidelines for Staff

- Members of staff must have their personal digital devices on silent during class hours.
- Personal communications must be confined to break times.
- Members of staff must use school equipment for all school communication where available.

- Personal electronic devices will not be used in sight of children for personal reasons except in the case of emergency.
- All members of staff are discouraged from using their personal mobile phones to contact parents/guardians. If it is used, staff will block their caller ID.
- Members of staff are not to give their personal mobile phone to pupils under any circumstances. If a child urgently needs to talk to their parent, the teacher is advised to make the call and remain with the child for the duration of the call.

H. Sanctions

Pupils who ignore school policy and use a personal electronic device on school grounds, or are seen with a personal electronic device will be required to hand over the device to a member of staff, and parents will be informed. Where there is reasonable justification for the contents of a device to be searched, pupils must unlock and provide access to their devices. Confiscated devices must be signed for and collected by a parent/guardian at the school office.

Similarly, the use of all personal electronic devices is not permitted during the school day – this includes arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.

If a pupil uses a device to take photographs, video footage or recording of other pupils or staff members, or shares inappropriate messages, this will be regarded as unacceptable behaviour, and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the School's Code of Positive Behaviour Policy and/or Anti-Bullying Policy. Such recordings or content, in any format, will be permanently deleted unless required by the school for further examination or evidence.

I. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all Parents/Guardians, Staff and Pupils to adhere to this policy. This policy is subject to regular review in 2025 or as the need arises.

J. Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the BOM on 26/01/2022 and will be shared with the school community via email and will be posted on the school website.