

# Mobile Phone and Electronic Media Device Usage Policy

The management and staff of Benincasa School are appreciative of the students' and parents' on-going support of our efforts to maintain and foster the positive use of technology in a caring and safe learning environment.

## ***Introduction***

Benincasa School recognises many students own a mobile phone/electronic device and we acknowledge the positive aspects of this. Nonetheless, this cannot compromise or disrupt teaching and learning. Urgent phone calls to or from a student will always be facilitated through the office. There are potential dangers for the school community (pupils, parents, visitors, staff, coaches, teaching staff, management, trustees) stemming from the misuse and abuse of electronic media. As a result, the school will rigorously endeavour to protect the personal dignity and right to privacy of all the members of the school community.

## ***Rationale***

- The use of mobile phones/ electronic devices has increased dramatically in the last number of years.
- Mobile phones/ electronic devices can be of great benefit to students when used appropriately.
- Mobile Phones /electronic devices can distract from Teaching and Learning when used in an inappropriate manner, i.e. if they ring or are used during class time.
- Mobile Phones/ electronic devices can be a cause of difficulty inside and outside of school when/ if mobile phones are used in “cyber bullying”, where students/ teachers are photographed against their will, where some recordings/ video recordings are made against the will of those featured etc.,
- Mobile Phones/electronic devices are often mislaid by students.
- Mobile Phones/electronic devices can be a major distraction to students in the causing isolation rather than interaction and integration of students.

## ***Aims***

- To optimise teaching and learning situations for students.
- To reduce the possible distractions to/for the students.
- To provide an environment free from threat or invasion of privacy.

- To discourage cyber bullying among students.
- To encourage face to face interaction among students between students between classes.

## ***Rule***

The school includes the school buildings, environs and all school related activities that occur on-site and off-site in the name of the school.

The misuse of mobile phones, electronic recording devices, or the Internet is a serious breach of the school's Code of Behaviour. All mobile phones/electronic devices are to be switched off and handed to staff who will store them safely during school hours.

While off the school premises, but on school business (e.g. games, field trips and school tours etc.), mobile phones /electronic devices must remain in the school. However, if it is necessary for the student to contact her parent/guardian, it will be done through staff.

## ***Definitions***

'Switched off' means powered off.

## ***Policy Sanctions***

1. Students found in contravention of this rule will be asked to go to the Deputy Principal or Principal. They may have mobile phones/electronic devices confiscated. A letter will be given to the student to inform him/her parent/guardian that the mobile phones/electronic devices have been confiscated. The mobile phones/electronic devices will be kept until a time when a parent/guardian is in a position to collect the phone/device from the School Office.
2. The name of the student and other relevant details will be recorded.
3. The mobile phone /electronic devices and SIM card will be kept in the School Office until such time as it is collected by a parent/ legal guardian.
4. A student who refuses to surrender a mobile phone/electronic device found in his/her possession, will be considered to have committed a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and therefore may be removed.
5. Subsequent breaches of this policy will result in confiscation of the mobile phone/electronic device for five school days and the school will require a written statement of support of the mobile phone policy from the parent/guardian and from the pupil.

## ***Misuse of Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices***

- An incident on school activities or in the school building during the school day where mobile phones/electronic devices are used to bully or harass a member of the school community is a serious breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and will be dealt with accordingly.
- In such cases the mobile phones/electronic devices will be confiscated at the Principal's discretion.
- It should be noted it is an offence to use a mobile phones/electronic devices to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardai in such incidents.
- The Principal may invoke the schools Code of Behaviour and impose sanctions as per the Code of Behaviour.
- The school accepts no responsibility for damage to or loss of a phone/electronic device held in contravention of the school policy.

## ***WHILE ON SCHOOL PREMISES OR WHEN OFF THE PREMISES ON AUTHORISED SCHOOL BUSINESS (e.g. games, field trips, etc.)***

- Photographs cannot be taken, nor can recordings (audio or visual) be made, of a member of the school community without his/her expressed permission.
- Using phones or any other recording devices to record a person without appropriate authorisation, will be considered a serious breach of the School's Code of Behaviour.
- Students will observe good 'netiquette' (i.e. etiquette on the Internet) in their representation of and comments on members of the school community and about the school itself. (Refer to the Internet Use Policy)
- Students will not upload, download, send or forward any material on the Internet that is obscene, defamatory or intended to annoy or harass a member of the school community.
- No photographs of, or recordings (audio or visual) of, or comments about a member of the school community can be uploaded to the Internet without his/her expressed permission and the permission of the school Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Instances where the Internet is used to insult, offend, slander, defame, harass or bully a member of the school community by another member of the school community is a

serious offence and will be treated accordingly. Any student who uses the Internet as a vehicle to insult, offend, harass or bully another student or teacher will be deemed to have committed a serious breach of the School's Code of Behaviour and the school will have recourse to the range of sanctions available. The school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí in such instances.

Serious breaches of the School's Code of Behaviour will be dealt with by the Principal/ Deputy Principal and may be reported to the Board of Management.

It is intended a copy of this Policy is available on the school website. Parents/guardians and students will be asked to read and sign.

### ***Date and Ratification by the Board of Management***

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.

This policy will be implemented from \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

Date of the next review: \_\_\_\_\_