

# BALLINROBE COMMUNITY SCHOOL PERSONAL ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT POLICY

Definition of items covered by this policy: Personal electronic equipment means: all phones and all other devices which could be used to communicate with, record or film another individual. This policy also covers personal music equipment and any other device which could interfere with health and safety regulations and could compromise the learning environment in Ballinrobe Community School.

## CONTEXT OF POLICY:

1. Considering the increase in social media communications and internet activity, all school personnel, including students, must remain aware that creating, storing and publishing images, including video and audio files, must adhere to GDPR, Child Protection, and other relevant legislation, (which also includes the Code of Behaviour, Internet Acceptance Use Policy and Anti-Bully Policy at Ballinrobe Community School).
2. Individuals' personal rights, privacy and reputations must be safeguarded at all times. Teachers, students, parents and guardians must be aware of the risks associated with publishing digital images on the internet, cognisant of the fact that these digital images remain available on the internet indefinitely and may cause harm to individuals, not only at the time of publication but also in the future. Derogatory comments published to cause offence to any member of the school community is also not tolerated.
3. As part of student's mental and physical health, their overall social development and general wellbeing, Ballinrobe Community School forbids the use of personal Electronic Equipment in and around the school during the school day.
4. In order to secure the learning environment in our school During school hours, students must give teaching and learning their full attention and participate fully in all class activities.

All personal electronic equipment must be switched off and locked in the student's locker from 9.10 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Thursday and from 9.10 am to 1.25 pm on Friday.

5. Protection of individual persons working or studying in the school

It is absolutely prohibited to photograph/film/record another person without his/her prior permission and approval. Any phones or any other recording devices being in the possession of a student during the school day will be confiscated, may be checked by the school authorities in the presence of a parent/guardian to ensure that they have not been misused in this manner.

If it is found that a person has filmed/recorded another individual without his/her knowledge or approval, and/or if that material has been shared with other people either from one device to another or on the internet, the case will immediately be brought before the Board of Management where the full range of sanctions will be open to it. The individual recorded or filmed without consent may also choose to take legal action.

6. In the interest of Health and Safety Students must be able to hear safety instructions when issued on the school grounds and/or in the corridors and classrooms-therefore the use of

personal electronic equipment is not permitted on the school grounds or in the school building during the hours stated above.

Any parent(s)/guardian(s) wishing to urgently contact their son/daughter may contact the school office to relay urgent messages. Any student needing urgently to contact their parent(s)/guardian(s) may come to the school office to use the phone.

7. Risk to expensive personal electronic equipment

The school authorities cannot be responsible for the safe keeping of various items of electronic equipment students choose to bring to school. They do this entirely at their own risk and against the school's advice.

## STUDENT GUIDELINES

Ballinrobe Community School strongly recommends that students do not bring electronic equipment to School.

Students bringing electronic equipment to school must have it turned off and locked in their locker during the school day.

**The only exception to this rule is when the teacher instructs the student to use them for educational tasks.**

Any equipment seen/heard/used during the school day will immediately be confiscated by staff, put in a confiscation envelope and given to the relevant year head/Deputy Principal or Principal who will then lock it in the school safe.

The school authorities may check the device in the presence of a parent/guardian to ensure that it has not been used to photograph, film or record any other person or persons.

If it has not been used inappropriately, parents will be informed that the phone has been confiscated and must be collected by a parent from the school office after the end of the school day (4pm). The incident will be noted on the student disciplinary file.

If it has been used inappropriately, a meeting will be organised with parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the referral to the Board of Management, and any legal action which may be taken.

In the case of the second time electronic equipment is seen/heard/used during the school day, it will immediately be confiscated, put into a confiscation envelope and given to the year head Deputy Principal or Principal who will then lock it in the school safe.

The school authorities may check the device in the presence of a parent/guardian to ensure that it has not been used to photograph, film or record any other person or persons.

If it has not been used inappropriately, parents will be informed that the phone has been confiscated and must be collected by a parent from the school office after the end of the school day (4pm). The incident will be noted on the student disciplinary file and the school will require a written statement of support for the "Personal Electronic Equipment Policy" from the parents and the student.

If it has been used inappropriately, a meeting will be organised with parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the referral to the Board of Management, and any legal action which may be taken.

In the case of a third time electronic equipment is seen/heard/used during the school day, it will immediately be confiscated, put into a confiscation envelope and given to the year head Deputy Principal or Principal who will lock it in the school safe.

The school authorities may check the device in the presence of a parent/guardian to ensure that it has not been used to photograph, film or record any other person or persons.

If it has not been used inappropriately, parents will be informed that the phone has been confiscated and will be retained in the school for a week and must be collected by a parent from the school office after the expiration of the week (after 4pm). The incident will be noted on the student disciplinary file and will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management.

A student who refuses to surrender a phone found in their possession, will be considered to have committed a serious breach of the School's Code of Behaviour.

An incident where mobile phones are used to bully or harass a member of the school community is a serious breach of the School's Code of Behaviour. In such cases the phone will be confiscated at the principal's discretion.

*In exceptional circumstances the organising teacher may, following a consultation with the Principal allow students access to their phones on an outing or a tour.*

**It should be noted that it is an offence to use a mobile phone or any other means of accessing the internet to menace, harass or offend another person: the school will refer such incidents to the Board of Management who will have the full range of sanctions up to and including expulsion available to it.**

The Board may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardai in such incidents.

<p>By enrolling in Ballinrobe Community School you are signifying acceptance of its policies. If you wish to raise any specific issues relating to these procedures please do so in writing to the Principal prior to your child attending the school.</p>
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