



**POLICY (Number: Hiv)
CELL PHONE POLICY**

1. Introduction

The school recognizes that cell-phones are part of modern society and that increasing numbers of school children either own one or have access to one. It is further acknowledged that there are particular circumstances where it may be appropriate and useful for children to have them in the school environment.

Nonetheless, the school has in place the appropriate procedures to ensure that parents and children are able to contact one another should the need arise. Should children need to contact their parents or care-givers during school hours they can either use the payphone or the office phone. Equally, should parents need to contact their children during normal school hours they can phone the office and a message will be conveyed to their child.

2. Challenges

Both the presence of cell-phones at school and their increasingly sophisticated technology present a number of challenges for the teaching environment. These include:

- 2.1 Cell-phones interrupting lessons and disturbing the learning environment;
- 2.2 Pupil distraction during class due to use of cell-phones on silent/vibrate;
- 2.3 Potential loss and theft of cell-phones;
- 2.4 The use of cell-phones for their games functions;
- 2.5 Inappropriate use of cell-phones during assessments/tests;
- 2.6 Inappropriate use of the camera, video, web and record functions of cell- phones;
- 2.7 Issues of social status, peer pressure, socialization and harassment.
- 2.8 The establishment of appropriate cell-phone etiquette.

3. Policy

Given the above challenges, the following conditions apply:

- 3.1 The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of cell-phones on the school premises or on school outings.
- 3.2 Cell-phones are only to be used for genuinely urgent reasons during the day. This would normally be to confirm transport home at the end of the day.
- 3.3 Cell-phones may only be turned on and/or used for urgent purposes with the permission of an appropriate teacher.
- 3.4 Cell-phones should be set and used in such a way that they do not distract, interrupt or prevent the main objective of lessons, prep times, school outings and other school activities from being achieved. Should a pupil use their phone inappropriately, it will be confiscated by the teacher and secured in the school office. Children will be required to explain to their parents what has occurred. The phone will be returned once parents have contacted the school and discussed the school policy with the appropriate member of staff.
- 3.5 For overnight camp-outs, the responsible teacher will discuss cell-phone usage with children prior to the camp departure.
- 3.6 The sending or recording of obscene or threatening messages (text or verbal or visual) and the taking and/or sending of inappropriate or unauthorized photographs or video footage with cell-phones is forbidden. It is also unlawful.



- 3.7 Phones may not be used to store pirated music and images. Should a pupil have unauthorized or illegal content on their phone, appropriate disciplinary action will follow.
- 3.8 In all test situations, all cell-phones must be turned off.
- 3.9 Children who do not adhere to the above conditions may have their phones confiscated (to be collected later by the parent) and, depending upon the nature and extent of the offence may be disciplined by the designated member of staff.
- 3.10 Staff will use their phones according to the same criteria as applied to pupils.

4. Additional Guidelines

- 4.1 It would be appreciated if parents would encourage their children to:
 - only take their cell-phones to school should there be a potential need to use them;
 - use their phones responsibly and courteously and adhere to the rules;
 - appreciate their ownership and use of a valuable asset;
 - be conscious of the fact that not all children possess phones and that all forms of boasting and “one-upmanship” are unattractive behaviours which may cause unnecessary tension between children.
- 4.2 Children’s fascination with cellular technology may lead them to spend excessive time text messaging one another when they could be having a face to face conversation. Whilst it is appreciated that technology generally enhances the communication options available to children, the ability to hold effective interpersonal conversations is an important life skill which needs to be nurtured and encouraged.
- 4.3 Worldwide, there is an alarming upward trend in the use of cell-phones for purposes of bullying. Victims of bullies may be harassed through text, verbal and visual messages. Any behaviour of this kind is viewed in an extremely serious light by the school and will be dealt with appropriately. In view of this, parents may wish to encourage their children to be cautious about whom they give their cell-phone numbers to.
- 4.4 It is recognized that, within reasonable limits, the school cannot prescribe how children should behave outside the confines of school activities. Nonetheless, should external activities of children impact upon pupil behaviours and performance at school, the school reserves the right to engage both children and parents about this.

5. Scope

These conditions apply to all children who bring a cell-phone to school. They will be formally explained to children in Grades 5, 6 and 7 as these are the grades within which increased cell-phone usage has been noticed. It is also these grades which tend to stay later for sport. For children in grades 1 to 4, parents who would like to provide their children with a cell-phone at school are requested please to discuss this with their class teacher. Should it be agreed to be appropriate, the teacher will provide the parent with the policy and the parent will be requested to discuss the policy with the child.