



Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Policy Regulating the use of Mobile Phones and Smart Devices

Modification of the School's Mobile Phone Policy.

Introduction

In the interest of privacy and safety, the Board of Management of Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School took the decision to withdraw consent for the possession of mobile phones by pupils of the school anywhere on the campus in 2013 and again in 2019 following a full review of the policy in conjunction with staff, parents and the Board of Management.

Mary Mother of Hope's Smartphone Free Voluntary Code

This policy was further reviewed in May 2025 following the introduction of Mary Mother of Hope's Smartphone Free Voluntary Code. In February 2025, the Parents Association with the support of the junior and senior school staff and Board of Managements introduced the 'Smart Phone Free Voluntary Code', encouraging all parents in Mary Mother of Hope Schools voluntarily agree to delay purchasing or providing a smartphone and access to social media until their child has finished their time in primary school.

Mary Mother of Hope SNS Mobile Phone and Smart Device Free

Mary Mother of Hope SNS remains mobile phone and smart device free. Smartwatches that can access the internet, take photographs and record media are not permitted to be worn in school, even when in 'school mode'. Children should never have a personal smart device in school (in the building, on the school grounds or during off-site activities such as tours/ sports events/ visits to the church etc.).

Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones, smart devices and tablets by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions.

The promotion of digital technologies for teaching, learning and assessment is a priority of the Department of Education and Skills. Research shows that digital technologies can play a positive role in supporting high quality teaching, learning and assessment. The use of tablet devices and smartphones is now an integral part of the lives of children and young people.

The school's Digital Learning Plan and Acceptable Usage Policy outlines how digital technologies will be used in the school to enhance teaching, learning and assessment.

In developing this policy, the Board of Management took account of the fact of the many benefits to technology. While smartphones and smart devices offer numerous advantages, the Board is also aware of the dangers which unchecked access to this technology can present. They can expose primary school children, to several risks – including cyberbullying and encountering age inappropriate and harmful content. Smart devices and access to the Internet have the potential to be increasingly abused, especially by young people who may not always be aware of the consequences of their actions.

There is an increasing body of evidence of cyber-bullying at primary and post-primary level whereby young people can use this new technology to victimize others. This can take many forms- the abuse of texting services and/or social media apps, the use of camera or video camera facilities on such devices or the inappropriate use of the internet. It is clear to us that children of primary school age have not developed the emotional or social maturity to deal with and think through the consequences of mis-use of this technology.

School Procedures

The Staff in the school and the Board of Management have given very careful consideration to the matter. We have come to the view that, while there may be a certain advantage to children having a mobile or smart device with them in school, the potential for mis-use and damage is much greater.

Given that the Board of Management has overall responsibility for the welfare, the well-being and safety of all of the children in our care, the Board has taken the decision to **withdraw consent** for the possession of mobile phones and smart devices in the school. Mary Mother of Hope is a mobile phone and smart device free school.

In the interests of Health and Safety of our pupils, the school phone is available to pupils, with their teacher's permission, to phone a parent during the school day. Parents are welcome to contact the school (01 8128693) should they wish to speak with or relay a message to their child.

Using Mobile Phones or Smart Devices Inappropriately

Mary Mother of Hope is a mobile phone and smart device free school. Pupils who are found with a mobile phone or smart devices in their possession on school premises or during school-related activities will be treated as having broken the school's Code of Behaviour and will be disciplined accordingly. The device will be confiscated and will only be released to the child's parent by the school principal.

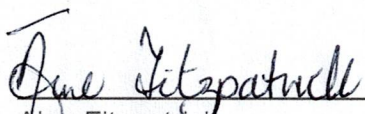
Should it come to our attention that children are misusing phones or smart devices by uploading images, through social media apps and/or sharing negative commentary about parents, peers or teachers children will face sanctions in line with the school's Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policy. This policy includes any interactive device which has a camera, messaging function or games.

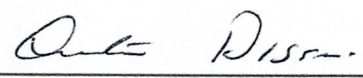
Implementation

While members of the Board of Management do not make this decision lightly, we hope that parents will understand that the greater good is paramount in this matter. The Board urges all parents to give this matter their fullest co-operation. The Board will keep this policy under ongoing review.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 01.07.25


Aine Fitzpatrick
Principal


Anita Diggin
Chairperson of the Board of Management