



Mobile Phone and Electronic Games Policy Introductory Statement

This policy was drawn up in February 2020 in response to technological advances which have seen a significant increase in handheld electronic 'gadgets' amongst the school population over recent years.

Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones 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. **Therefore the school prohibits the use of mobile phones in school by students.**

They are a potential and real source of bullying and abuse through texting and the dissemination of unacceptable and inappropriate images

Ballá National School prohibits mobile phones on the premises for the following reasons:

Use of mobile phones (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including:

- Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft
- Mobile phones (and their cost and level of sophistication – or otherwise) can make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying
- Even when apparently silent, the use of mobiles phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline
- Use of the newer phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images
- Many of the above issues also pertain to I-Pods, +tablets, Game Boys, PSPs, etc. They can be very intrusive, distracting and antisocial in a school environment



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- Mobile phones may be used to conduct bullying campaigns **Relationship to School Ethos** The unauthorized use of mobile phones and other electronic gadgets contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment conducive to learning, a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of Balla NS.

Aims

- To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones at our school. To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.
- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to children's learning **Internal School Procedures** The following are the guidelines for mobile phone / electronic games usage in the school: Mobile Phone Use by Children
 1. Children are **not allowed the use of mobile phones** during school hours. If there are extenuating circumstances and a child must bring a phone to school, it must be handed up to the teacher first thing in the morning, with an explanation-either in writing or via phone call by the parent/guardian. The phone must be stored securely and discreetly . The school holds no responsibility for phones lost, damaged or stolen on school grounds or on external school visits.
 2. Personal electronic gadgets, tablets, ipods, ipads or consoles are not allowed in school, either during school hours or on school tours.
 3. Children who need to contact home in an emergency during school hours may do so through their class teacher/Office using the school landline phone.
 4. Any pupil who uses a mobile phone or brings an electronic game to school risks having it confiscated. This device will be turned off and only returned to the parent/guardian.
 5. If a pupil is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone of either other pupils or teachers, this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken according to the school's Code of Behaviour.

Mobile Phone Use by Staff

1. Staff use of mobile phones will be confined to break times and after school (except in the case of an emergency).



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2. Staff are reminded to be careful when using their personal mobile phones to contact parents. For privacy & personal safety, teachers should use the school phone or if personal phone must be used, the personal phone number should be withheld through the phone settings.

3. If Personal phones are being used to take photographs of children, school environment, or staff, it should be deleted once used. School ipads/camera cameras should be used for official school photography. (Please see our Data Protection Policy for storage of photos)

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff, parents and pupils share in the coordination and implementation of this policy.

All staff, parents & pupils have a responsibility for appropriately using electronic gadgets & phones. Please read our Acceptable Use Policy and our Anti-Bullying Policy in relation to this.

Evaluation

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis and amendments may be added as new technology comes on stream.

Implementation

This policy will continue to be implemented following ratification.

Ratification: John Nicholas

Date: 15th June 2020 Chairperson

On Behalf of the Board of Management

