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## Mobile Phone Policy

### **Introduction:**

This policy was formulated during the academic year 25-26 by the principal and teaching staff of Stratford NS in consultation with parents and the Board of Management.

### **Rationale for Policy:**

This mobile phone policy was formulated following the publication of Circular 0044/2025 by the Department of Education and Youth, requiring primary schools to ban the use of and access to personal mobile phones during the school day<sup>1</sup>.

Stratford NS supports this ban as it will

- Provide pupils with a distraction-free learning environment.
- Reduce opportunities for cyberbullying, accessing inappropriate online content during school hours and excessive phone use.
- Enhance social interaction among pupils during break and lunchtime.

### **Scope**

The Board of Management accepts that it is not realistic to have a policy, which prohibits pupils from taking phones to school, as pupils may need to contact their parents in respect of any situation that might arise outside of school or on the way to and from school.

This policy prohibits the use by pupils of mobile phones, smartwatches and electronic devices while on the school premises, grounds or off-site activities e.g. school swimming, school trips. For this reason, the school strongly discourages the bringing of these devices to school by students unless deemed absolutely necessary by parents/guardians.

### **Definition**

For the purposes of this policy, “mobile phone” refers to any personal handheld device that allows communication, internet access, messaging or photography (e.g., smartphones, smart watches).

### **Procedures:**

- Pupils are not permitted to use or access personal mobile phones at any time during the school day.
- Phones must be turned off and securely stored upon arrival at school. Acceptable storage solutions include:
  - Handed in to the school office on arrival.
  - Stored in a designated classroom area.
- Use of these devices for the recording of pupils or staff members will be deemed a serious or gross misbehaviour (as per our Code of Positive Behaviour) and will receive the warranted sanction as a result.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Circ0044\\_MobPhone\\_Ban\\_PrimarySchools\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Circ0044_MobPhone_Ban_PrimarySchools_Final.pdf)



- Pupils who need to contact home during school hours may do so only through the office with the permission of their class teacher.
- In cases of emergency, the office is the first point of contact and can ensure that your child is reached quickly and a message passed onto them. Parents are requested not to contact their children via their mobile devices during the school day. The school's contact details are
  - 01 4922315
  - 089 4943899
  - [info@stratfordns.ie](mailto:info@stratfordns.ie)
- Staff are permitted to use their phones for school-related business or for emergencies only. Staff should not use their phones for personal reasons during teacher-pupil contact time.
- All staff contact with parents will be through Aladdin, the homework journal or through the school office. Should a teacher require to call a parent, they are advised to use the school line. Should they require to contact on their own device, they are advised to block their mobile number prior to calling.
- The school will not be liable for replacing mobile phones or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged. All devices are brought to school at the owner's risk. i.e. the parent of the child.
- Pupils are expected to follow staff directions regarding phone storage and handling.

### Exemptions

Exemptions to the ban may be granted by the Principal on a case-by-case basis for:

- Medical reasons (e.g., monitoring specific health conditions where the phone or app is essential for health/safety).
- Wellbeing-related needs that have been documented and communicated to the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs who require access for learning supports.

All exemptions must be formally approved in advance and documented.

### Non-Compliance

Non-compliance with this policy will result in the following:

- First offence: Phone confiscated and returned at end of school day.
- Second offence: Phone confiscated; parent/guardian must collect the phone from the school office.
- Third offence and subsequent incidents: Further disciplinary action in line with the school's Code of Behaviour

Refusal to hand over a phone when instructed by a staff member will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter. The school reserves the right to adjust sanctions based on circumstances and repetition of infractions.

### Digital Education and Wellbeing

While mobile phones are banned during the school day, the school is committed to:

- Helping pupils develop digital literacy, online safety awareness and responsible use of technology.



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- Providing age-appropriate education about the benefits and risks of digital technologies.

### Communication

This policy will be communicated to pupils, parents/guardians and staff at the start of each school year and made available on the school website.

### Review

This policy will be reviewed at least once every two years, or sooner if required by changes to national guidance or school community needs.

Signed: Fiona Henry

Chairperson

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026

