

Mobile Phones Policy

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School



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Catholic Social Teaching



Solidarity

As a school we are aware most students will have a mobile device on them during the school day. We are working together to ensure that mobile phones, whilst a useful technological tool, do not become a distraction from the focus of school.

Acceptable Use Policy (Students)

Purpose

The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at school. This Mobile Phone Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students, parents and carers' guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.

Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the Mobile Phone Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to school.

The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities both on the school campus and off-site.

Rationale

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.

Personal safety and security

Our School accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/mis-use of those capabilities.

Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school. It is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.

Students are responsible for keeping the school informed of their current mobile phone to aid return if lost on the school site.

Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

Acceptable Uses

Mobile phones should be switched off and kept out of sight during the school day. Parents/carers are requested that in cases of emergency they contact the school first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements.

Mobile phones should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school (see below).

Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.

The school recognises the importance of emerging technologies present in modern mobile phones e.g. camera and video recording, internet access, MP3 and MP4 playback, blogging etc. In the future teachers may wish to utilise these functions to aid teaching and learning and students may have the opportunity to use their mobile phones in the classroom. On these occasions students may use their mobile phones in the classroom when express permission has been given by the teacher. The use of personal mobile phones in one lesson for a specific purpose does not mean blanket usage is then acceptable.

Unacceptable Uses

Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during school time and other educational activities, such as assemblies.

The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones.

Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping. They should be turned off during the school day.

Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.

It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to

photograph or film any student or member of staff without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.

It is forbidden to use a mobile phone to film a fight either inside or outside of school involving students from Ellesmere Port Catholic High School. It is also forbidden to post footage onto any social media website that may cause distress to any students or bring the school's name into disrepute. If this does occur, police will be informed and all students involved in filming the incident will be spoken to by police either at school or at their family home.

Students should have their phones secure inside bags prior to entering the changing rooms. Under no circumstances should mobile phones be out of bags in changing rooms. Mobile phones are not to be used in changing rooms. Mobile phones are not to be taken out of bags or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to fellow students, staff or visitors to the school. PE staff will confiscate any mobile phones found out of school bags and in use in these areas immediately.

Should there be one disruption to lessons caused by a mobile phone, the responsible student may face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Director of Care & Engagement in charge of Behaviour and Attitudes. The phone will be confiscated for the remainder of the day.

1st offence, the student's phone is confiscated until the end of the day in which they collect from their pastoral leader. 2nd offence, the student's parents must collect the phone from school. 3rd Offence, The phone will not be handed back to the student, this must be the Parent or Guardians responsibility to collect from the meeting with the pastoral leader. In the instance where a student refuses to hand over a phone they will be placed in the Pope Francis centre (internal exclusion) either the same or next day for breaking the school policy and parents will be notified.

It is unacceptable to take a picture of a member of staff without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images.

Theft or damage

Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.

Students who bring a mobile phone to school should leave it locked away in their locker/bag when they arrive. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.

Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to Student Services.

The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.

Lost and stolen mobile phones in the U.K. can be blocked across all networks making them virtually worthless because they cannot be used. In the event of a loss or theft on school premises, the school will assist in arranging blocking.

Inappropriate conduct

Mobile phones are banned from all examinations. Students are expected to leave their mobile phones, switched off, in their bags, before entering the exam hall or they should hand phones to invigilators before entering the exam hall. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.

Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action.

Students with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

Sanctions

Students who infringe the rules set out in this document will have their phones confiscated by teachers. If the phone is being used inappropriately the student must give it to a teacher if requested.

Any further infringements of the mobile phone code of conduct may result in a ban on bringing a mobile phone to school, or time in the Pope Francis Centre, SLT detentions etc.

As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident – of a serious nature - being referred to the police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.