

Ballyhaunis Community School



Mobile Phone Policy

Recording Devices/Smart watches, etc.

Ratified by the Board of Management on:

Signature:

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Commenced:	January 2024
Next review due:	January 2026

Introduction

Ballyhaunis Community School Mission Statement

“We in Ballyhaunis Community School are committed to fostering the holistic development of each individual.

We aim to promote equality for all and respect for one another and our environment and to give each person the opportunity to reach his/her potential.

While valuing our traditions we encourage innovative curricula to achieve these aims in a safe, caring and ordered manner in partnership within the school, with parents and with the broader community.”

Ballyhaunis Community School Motto

“Unity in Diversity”

Mobile phones have become an integral part of modern society; however, their usage in educational settings can often be disruptive and detrimental to the teaching and learning environment. As such, Ballyhaunis Community School has formulated this Mobile Phone Policy to maintain a focused and productive educational atmosphere while ensuring the safety and well-being of our students and staff.

Reasons for Policy Implementation:

1. Minimising Distractions: Mobile phones can serve as distractions, diverting students' attention away from their studies and disrupting the learning process.
2. Promoting Social Interaction: By discouraging mobile phone usage, we aim to encourage face-to-face communication and social interaction among students, fostering a sense of community within the school.
3. Ensuring Academic Integrity: Mobile phones have the potential to facilitate academic dishonesty through unauthorised communication or access to online resources during assessments.

This policy applies to students of Ballyhaunis Community School at the following times:

1. While on the school grounds.
2. While representing the school.
3. While on school trips, tours, exchanges, or fieldtrips.
4. While supporting school teams or activities.
5. On any occasion when accompanied by school personnel.

Ballyhaunis Community School recognises that it is a student's right to carry a mobile phone to school and we acknowledge the positive aspects of this in terms of personal security. Nonetheless, this right cannot compromise or disrupt teaching and learning. Therefore, students are encouraged to leave their phones at home. If a student requires

access to a phone for reasons around transport, then they may be permitted to have a phone in school. In such cases the expectation is that the phone is placed in the student's locker for the duration of the school day. Student's mobile phones are expected to be always powered off when on the school premises.

Urgent Phone calls

Urgent phone calls to or from a student will always be facilitated through the office. Parents/Guardians are asked to cooperate with this policy by refraining from making calls/texts to their daughter's/son's mobile phones during the school day.

Misuse of electronic devices

There are potential dangers for the school community (pupils, parents, visitors, staff, coaches, teaching staff, management, trustees) stemming from the misuse and abuse of electronic media. As a result, the school will rigorously endeavour to protect the personal dignity and right to privacy of all the members of the school community.

The misuse of mobile phones, electronic recording devices, digital media or the Internet is a serious breach of the School Code of Behaviour. Ballyhaunis Community School will respond appropriately in such cases and will have the full range of sanctions open to it.

Mobile Phones/Devices

1. Students are not permitted to carry phones during the school day. Students must ensure that mobile phones/devices are always switched off while on the school grounds and must be placed in student's locker for the duration of the school day. If attending evening study students should ensure that mobile phones are switched off for the duration of study also.
2. While off the school premises, but on school business (e.g. games, field trips etc), mobile phones/devices must be switched off. However, if it is necessary for the student to contact his/her parent/guardian, then permission to turn on a mobile phone must be sought from the supervising teacher. The phone must be turned off again at the conclusion of the conversation. The supervising teacher will ensure that this has happened. Switched off does not include 'Silent', 'Meeting' or any similar mode. The phone must be powered off.
3. Students are not permitted to use their phones to pay for purchases at the school canteen.

Sanctions:

1. Students carry phones on their person and found in contravention of the above will have phones/devices confiscated.
2. A student should ensure that his/her phone/device is powered off before being surrendered to the teacher. The name of the student and other relevant details will be recorded.
 - a. Parent's/Guardian's will be contacted to inform them that a phone/device has been confiscated and it can be collected at the parent's/guardian's earliest convenience from the main office/Principal/ Deputy Principal after the end of the school day. (4.00pm Mon-Thurs, 1.20pm Friday)
 - b. A student who refuses to surrender a phone/device found in his/her possession, which is not turned off, will be considered to have committed a serious breach of the School Code of Behaviour.
 - c. In the case of second and subsequent offences, the school will implement its Code of Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures.
 - d. A student whose phone/device is confiscated repeatedly will receive an afterschool Friday detention, notice of which will be sent to Parent's/Guardian's.
3. An incident where mobile phones are used to bully or harass a member of the school community is a serious breach of the School's Code of Behaviour. In such cases the phone will be confiscated at the Principal's discretion. It should be noted that it is an offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí in such incidents.
4. The school accepts no responsibility for damage to or loss of the phone.
5. It is strongly advised that students use pins/passwords to ensure that unauthorised use cannot be made of their phones.
6. The management and staff of Ballyhaunis Community School are appreciative of students' and parents' ongoing support of our efforts to maintain and foster the positive use of technology in a caring and safe learning environment.

What is considered by the school to be the inappropriate use of mobile phones/devices and what sanctions will apply?

Inappropriate use	Sanction
Using a phone/device within the school grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone confiscated until collected by Parent/Guardian. • Detention for repeat offences. • Suspension if problem persists.
Taking any recording (sound, photo or video) of any staff member without his/her permission	Suspension
Posting of any recording (sound, photo or video) of a staff member on social media without his/her permission	Suspension
Using a phone/device to bully, intimidate, harass or embarrass any student or staff member	Suspension
Taking any recording (sound, photo or video) of any student without his/her permission	Suspension
Posting of any recording (sound, photo or video) of a student on social media without her permission	Suspension
Using a phone/device in the course of the school day to access what the school considers to be offensive or harmful information	Suspension
Using a phone/device in any other way that damages the school's good standing and reputation	Suspension

Other points:

- No student has permission, at any time, to charge their phones/devices in the school.
- Whilst this policy relates to the use of phones/devices in school by students, the school reserves the right to investigate the inappropriate use of phones/devices outside of school if such usage impacts negatively upon students or staff.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the Acceptable Use Policy & Code of Behaviour which also refers to the use of mobile phones/devices.

Exceptions:

- Special provision will of be made for students who require phones for medical reasons, subject to approval by the Principal & Year Head.
- EAL students will be permitted to use school devices under the supervision of the class teacher.
- Students that are members of the school's media team will be permitted to use the schools devices for coverage of events, e.g. photographs of matches, Future leaders X and Instagram accounts, etc.

Modification Clause

The Board of Management in consultation with the school management team reserves the right to modify the details of this policy at short notice in response to events or circumstances that were not foreseeable when the policy was being first drafted or subsequently reviewed. This policy will be periodically reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and relevance in the evolving landscape of technology and education. Any necessary revisions will be communicated to students, parents, and staff accordingly.

Conclusion:

Ballyhaunis Community School is committed to providing a conducive learning environment that prioritises academic excellence, student well-being, and respect for one another. This Mobile Phone Policy serves as a cornerstone in achieving these objectives and fostering a positive school culture.