

## Mobile Phone Policy

### Donabate Community College



This Mobile Phone Policy is to be reviewed by the Board of Management every year.

This Mobile Phone Policy was agreed on 25/4/2023

Signature                      Cllr. Adrian Henchy

(Chair Person to the Board of Management)

Principal                      Mr. Anthony Creevey

Date for Review              24/04/2025

## **Introduction**

Donabate Community College is a post primary school, which opened in August 2008 under the Patronage of County Dublin VEC (now Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education Training Board). The college is co-educational and aspires towards excellence in a caring and supportive environment.

As Donabate Community College will be catering in the foreseeable future to an ever-increasing population growth within its catchment area, the Board of Management will review the Mobile Phone Policy on a regular basis.

The Board of Management is committed to the successful implementation of recent legislation, in particular the Education Act (1998), the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the Equal Status Act (2000). The Board fully subscribes to the principles of partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion and respect for diversity, parental choice and equality.

## **School Mission**

The Board of Management will promote Excellence. Our aim will be to create, with the assistance of parents/guardians, responsible citizens with pride in their community. The development of the whole person will be based on personal responsibility, interdependence, respect for people and respect for property. Our school will seek to instil integrity, value discipline and punctuality and facilitate the best in academic and non-academic areas. We will value our culture, our tradition, be inclusive of religious beliefs and will seek to be a caring and compassionate community where justice and truth will be the central elements.

## **1. Rationale**

Donabate Community College recognises that mobile phones and digital devices are now an integral part of young peoples' culture and way of life and can have considerable value, particularly in relation to individual safety.

It is recognised that such technology will play an increasing part in future learning practices, but, like existing ICT use, this should follow agreed rules and guidelines to prevent disruption and instil good learning habits. The school aims to educate pupils in the responsible use of technology.

Mobile phones present a number of issues in the school environment:

- They are valuable items that can be stolen
- Their use can render pupils subject to potential bullying or inappropriate contact
- They can disrupt the learning environment
- Camera functions can lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images

While the school accepts that pupils are permitted to bring mobile phones and digital devices to school, their use is subject to the following guidelines.

Note: The term 'phone' in this policy denotes mobile phones, Airpods, earphones and any similar portable electronic devices.

## **2. Responsible Use**

Students are required to use phones and devices in a responsible manner during approved times. Responsible use includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading or offensive images.
- The transmission of some images/information can be a criminal offence and will be dealt with as such by the school and maybe relayed to An Garda Siochana.
- Cyber-bullying is completely unacceptable and is considered a serious breach of the school's Code of Positive Behaviour. Sanctions as per the code will be invoked as necessary.
- Responsibility for mobile phones and devices rests with the student and the school accepts no financial responsibility for damage, loss or theft.
- Donabate Community College aims to provide effective teaching and learning in a safe and caring atmosphere. Phones can disrupt effective teaching and learning, even when in silent mode, and irresponsible use can lead to child protection and data protection being compromise.

### 3. Rules

The following rules apply to all students:

- Students must not use a mobile phone at all during the course of the school day for any purpose (see exception below for senior students at break times).
- Mobile phones/headphones etc must not be visible at all during the course of the school day and must be switched off and stored in the students' bag (see exception below for senior students at break times).
- Headphones must not be worn during or between lessons. Where appropriate, an individual member of staff may give permission for the use of a device for a specific educational purpose.
- Pupils must not use phones or MP3 players to broadcast music, or transfer inappropriate material.
- No device should be used in the school to photograph or video students or staff without the authority of the Principal. In the case of a student, a parent/guardian must give permission for such photographs/videos to be taken of their son/daughter.
- If there is an emergency which requires communication with home, pupils must speak to a member of staff who will deal with the matter.
- In an emergency parents/guardians should phone the school office and a message will be taken immediately to the student. This ensures that a student is given support and privacy in dealing with a potentially difficult situation.
- Students who feel unwell must report to their Year Head who will contact home and students are not permitted to use their mobile phones to make such calls. This allows support and supervision and also avoids students leaving the school grounds without a record being made.
- Mobile phones cannot, under any circumstances, be taken into examination rooms. Breach of this rule will lead to invalidation of that examination and potentially other examinations.
- Pupils need to acknowledge that it is a privilege to be permitted to bring mobile phones to school.
- **\*\*Exception for Senior Students\*\***: Note that senior students (5th, and 6th Years) are permitted to use their phones during break times, 10.30am-10.40am and 12.40pm-1.10pm, in designated areas only. Responsible phone use must be exercised at these times. At the end of the break, phones should be turned off and put back in the student's bag. This is a privilege that will be taken away if it is abused.

#### **4. Consequences**

In the event of a student failing to comply with the school policy, the following sanctions will apply:

##### First Offence

On the first offence, the phone/audio device will be removed from the student and brought to the main office where it will be stored securely. School authority will hold the phone/audio device until the end of the following school day. The student must collect the phone/audio device. The offence will be recorded by the reporting teacher and brought to the attention of the appropriate Class Tutor. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the offence.

##### Second Offence

Should a student be found to be using a phone/audio device for a second time, the phone/audio device will be removed from the student and brought to the main office where it will be stored securely. On this occasion, the phone/audio device will not be returned for two days after the offence (e.g. If a phone/audio device is confiscated on Tuesday, it cannot be collected until Thursday evening). School authority will hold the phone/audio device. Parents/Guardians are the only persons authorised to collect the phone/audio device. The offence will be recorded by the reporting teacher and brought to the attention of the appropriate Class Tutor. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the offence.

##### Third and Subsequent Offences

Should a student be found to be using a phone/audio device on a third or subsequent occasion, the phone/audio device will be removed from the student and brought to the main office where it will be stored securely. On this occasion, the phone/audio device will not be returned for four days after the offence (e.g. If a phone/audio device is confiscated on Monday, it cannot be collected until Friday evening). Parents/Guardians are the only persons authorised to collect the phone/audio device. The offence will be recorded by the reporting teacher and brought to the attention of the appropriate Class Tutor. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the offence.

If a student persists to breach the rules as laid out in this policy, then the parents/guardians and student will be requested to attend a meeting with School Management to discuss the issue. Furthermore, if no resolution to the breach of policy can be found, the Parent/Guardian may be requested to attend a Board of Management Meeting.

## NOTE:

Should a student be found to be using a phone/audio device during the course of the school day and refuses to hand up the phone/audio device, they will be brought immediately to the main office where a Parent/Guardian will be contacted and asked to take the student off the school premises for the remainder of the school day.

Students will only be allowed to return to school accompanied by their Parent/Guardian to meet with the Principal to discuss said breach of this policy.

All meetings held between the Parent/Student and School Authority will be recorded and held on file securely within the school.

## **5. Advice to students on the use of mobile phones**

- Using your mobile is convenient and practical but you need to observe some common sense ground rules to protect yourself from potential abuse or danger.
- Don't give out your number or friends' numbers to people you don't know.
- Keep your security code or PIN number private.
- If you get messages which upset you, don't reply but keep a record and tell an adult. In serious cases you can report it to the Gardai.
- If you receive an inappropriate image or text about someone, don't forward it to others. Distributing sexual images of other young people is harassment and is illegal. If you receive something like this, tell an adult immediately.
- Ask permission before taking a picture of your friends and think before sending it on. Once sent, you have lost control of it and it could become public before you know it.

## **6. Communication and Ratification**

- This policy was written by the Mobile Phone Policy Committee in collaboration with management, staff, the students' council, and the parents' council.
- This policy will be ratified by the Board of Management.
- It will be made available to parents and students.
- It will be placed on the documents section of VSware and Sharepoint for staff to access
- It will be published on the school's website.

## **7. Review and Development**

Donabate Community College will monitor, review and evaluate this policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure the maintenance of best practice within the school.

Review Dates: