



Mobile Phone and Smart Devices Policy

1.0 Rationale

The possession and use of mobile/smart phones by school students is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. The use of mobile phones and personal smart devices presents a number of problems that can prove intrusive and distracting in a school environment. They can be used to cause discipline problems or as a means of bullying others. The capacity of many devices to take photographs, make video or sound recordings could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images. In order to manage the issue of mobile phones, and other personal devices, the Board of Management has developed this policy

The use of personal mobile/smart phones and other electronic devices contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment, a provision that is central to the mission statement and ethos of Cloughduv National School.

2.0 Aims

The Board of Management is introducing a policy that prohibits the use by students of personal mobile/smart phones, and other personal devices, while on school premises or involved in school activities such as tours, trips or extra-curricular activities. This is in order to create a safer environment and to lessen intrusions on, and distractions to, children's learning.

3.0 Procedures

- The use of personal mobile/smart phones and other personal devices by children who attend the school is not allowed while the children are in the care of the school staff, while at school, on trips from the school or involved in extra-curricular activities. The children should, therefore, not bring mobile phones and other personal devices to school or when engaging in school-related activities.
- Mobile/Smart phones and other personal devices that are found in the school should be handed to the School Office.
- Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the School Secretary or Class Teacher using the School landline phone.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the School Office remains the first point of contact and can ensure that your child is reached quickly and a message passed onto them.
- Staff are permitted to use their phones for school-related business only or for emergencies. Staff should not use their phones for personal reasons during teacher-pupil contact time.

3.1 In the event that a parent/guardian thinks that their child having a phone in school is essential, the following will apply:

- Parent/Guardian must send the Principal a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring their mobile phone/device to school. The letter should be addressed to the Principal and this letter will be kept on file.



- The phone must be turned off throughout the school day, handed to the pupils Class Teacher and stored in a secure box in the classroom. Cloughduv National School accepts no liability for phones lost/stolen/damaged.

4.0 School Trips & Outings

Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones and other personal devices with them on school trips and tours. Teachers/Staff will have a contact number in the event that it is necessary to make contact with a parent/guardian.

5.0 Non-compliance

- Any child found to have a phone/personal devices in school without parental letter will have the phone/device confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent/guardian collects it. Similarly, the use of all personal electronic devices is not permitted during the school day – this includes arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.
- Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other personal device for any purpose, it will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent/guardian.
- The School will not be liable for replacing mobile phones or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged.
- The School incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and Acceptable Use Policy, and will treat breaches in the same manner as any other breach of these Policies.
- If a pupil uses a mobile phone or personal device to take photographs, video footage or recording of other pupils or staff members, or shares inappropriate messages this will be regarded as inappropriate behaviour, and disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the School's Code of Behaviour.



Voluntary Internet, Smart Device and Social Media Use Agreement

Introduction

The use of mobile and internet-enabled devices is part of our lives, and at Cloughduv National School we strive to ensure that all of our pupils are protected when using these devices. This agreement strives to ensure that when our pupils are online, whether inside or outside the school gate, we are making every effort to ensure they are supported, protected, and ultimately afforded the opportunity to learn and grow with digital technologies in a safe and supervised environment.

Smartphones and their risks are a very significant cause for concern for the entire school community. The misuse, abuse, and overuse of smartphones and internet-enabled devices is having serious consequences for our children.

The challenges posed by smartphones and social media are not confined to school hours. These technologies blur boundaries between home, school, and social life. Issues like cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and excessive screen time don't recognise physical or time-based limits, making it essential to address them as a community rather than just within school settings.

It is up to the entire school community to work together to protect the people with the least willpower and the greatest vulnerability to manipulation: our children.

The BoM, staff and parents' association respects each family's right to decide whether or not their child(ren) have access to a smartphone, and this is a completely **VOLUNTARY** agreement that is being proposed.



Background: Age of First Device

- The **Global Education Monitoring Report** commissioned by UNESCO warned that “the use of technology is associated with negative impacts on physical and mental well-being and increased susceptibility to online risks and harms, which affect academic performance in the long term.”
- **Social psychologist Jonathan Haidt**, author of *The Anxious Generation*, states that “smartphones and social media have ruined young people’s lives.” He describes smartphones as “experience blockers, depriving children of everything else they could be doing and isolating them.”
- **Dr. Mary Aiken**, the world’s leading cyber-psychologist, states no child under the age of 14 should own a smartphone as it can “facilitate the remote, covert and deviant targeting and grooming of a child.”
- Data from **Cyberkids** reveals that 82% of children have unsupervised access to smart devices, while 28% reported they could go online whenever they wanted.

Action Required

As parents of a child(ren) attending Cloughduv National School, we agree to the following:

1. Pupils attending Cloughduv N.S. will not have sole ownership of a smartphone.
2. Any smart device with a screen that is connected to the internet—such as a smartwatch with call and text functionality—is not permitted.
3. Families are mindful of all internet-enabled devices that your child uses, as they can allow the same functions as a smartphone.
4. When pupils are using internet-enabled devices, parental controls should be in place to limit screen time each day.

Suggestion: If your child requires a phone for security reasons (e.g. to contact you when away from home), an option is to provide a **family phone** that is **not internet-enabled**. This can be a communal phone used by each child when needed.



Background: Social Media & Communication Apps

- In Ireland, the **digital age of consent is 16 years** (Data Protection Act 2018). This is the minimum age a user must be before they can consent to internet companies/social networking sites collecting, processing, and/or storing their data. While age verification should be a key concern for online services, **parental involvement is central** to protecting our children online.
- Most platforms (e.g. YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Play Store, App Store) require users to be **13 years or older**, and typically require **parental permission for those under 18**.
- **Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy** has warned that children are exposed to harmful content on social media, including violent and sexual content, bullying, and harassment. He stated: “We are in the middle of a national youth mental health crisis, and I am concerned that social media is an important driver of that crisis—one that we must urgently address.”
- UCD Research shows children’s **safer use** of technology is linked to **improved feelings of well-being**

Action Required

As parents of a child(ren) attending Cloughduv National School, we agree to the following:

1. Pupils will not have social networking accounts on platforms intended for users aged 13 and over. (The digital age of consent in Ireland is 16 years)
2. Pupils should not use any platform with group chat features. The school does not support or supervise class group chats. If your child is part of such a chat, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure it is age-appropriate, monitored, and does not affect the wellbeing of other students.
3. Parents will supervise their child's online activity, ensuring there is **no unmonitored or private internet access**.

Ratified on: 23/10/2025

Signed Chairperson: Rosanna Hayes

Signed Principal: Stephen O'Gorman



Useful Resources for Parents

- National Parents Council: [Guide to A Better Internet](https://www.npc.ie/images/uploads/downloads/Webwise-Parents-Guide.pdf)
<https://www.npc.ie/images/uploads/downloads/Webwise-Parents-Guide.pdf>
- ISPCC: [10 questions to ask your child before getting them a smartphone](https://www.ispcc.ie/10-questions-to-ask-your-child-before-getting-them-a-smartphone/)
<https://www.ispcc.ie/10-questions-to-ask-your-child-before-getting-them-a-smartphone/>
- ISPCC: [Digital Ready Hub](https://www.ispcc.ie/ispcc-digital-ready-hub/)
<https://www.ispcc.ie/ispcc-digital-ready-hub/>
- Webwise: [Parents' Guide to a Better Internet](https://www.webwise.ie/guides-parents/)
<https://www.webwise.ie/guides-parents/>
- *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt
- Department of Education: [Keeping Childhood Smartphone-Free](https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/keeping-childhood-smartphone-free/)
<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/keeping-childhood-smartphone-free/>
- Cyberkids: [Left To Their Own Devices](https://www.cybersafekids.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Full-CSK-TU-Report-23-24-Final.pdf)
<https://www.cybersafekids.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Full-CSK-TU-Report-23-24-Final.pdf>

Disclaimer

The information supplied in this document is intended as a **guide**. It does not replace the importance of **parental involvement and supervision** of children's online activities. Links to external sites are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute endorsement or approval by Cloughduv N.S. of any third-party services or opinions.



Voluntary Internet, Smart Device and Social Media Use Sign-Up Sheet

I/We (Parents/Guardians Print Name)

Together with my/our child/children (Print Name(s) and Class)

Agree to the recommendations set out in the Cloughduv N.S. Voluntary Internet, Smart Device and Social Media Use Agreement, and I/We will endeavour to implement these recommendations to the best of our ability in our use of technology at home.

Signed Parents/Guardians:

Signed Child/Children:
