

Personal Digital Devices Policy

Introduction

The possession and use of electronic devices and mobile phones by school pupils is now extensive. Navan ETNS supports the development of technology skills and recognises the educational value digital devices can have. At the same time, the school recognises potential problems associated with electronic devices and mobile phones, some of which are listed below:

- Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft.
- Mobile phones (and their cost and level of sophistication or otherwise) can make pupils
 objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and
 potential bullying.
- Even when apparently silent, the use of mobiles phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining classroom discipline.
- Use of phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images, sound and videos.
- Many of the above issues also pertain to I-pads, tablets, portable gaming devices, smart watches
 and other electronic devices. They can be very intrusive, distracting and anti-social in a school
 environment.

<u>Aims</u>

The aim of this Digital Device Policy is to:

- ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by electronic resources in a safe and effective manner
- inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of electronic devices and mobile phones at our school
- outline the procedures and processes of this policy

Personal Devices

Personal devices will not be used by children under any circumstances for school based activities. School owned devices (cameras, tablets, laptops etc.) will be the only devices used during school hours or school related activities to give best assurances of pupil and staff safety. This does not apply to devices that are granted under assistive technology or are used for medical reasons. Where a device is needed for medical reasons permission must be sought from the Board of Management. The board may request further details from a medical professional.

Smart Watches

Children are not permitted to have smart watches/technology on their person or in their possession. A smart watch is defined as a watch with the ability to make/receive calls, text messages, photographs and/or video content. A simple wrist watch or fitness trackers (that do not include any of the above technologies) are allowed.

Mobile Phones

The school's Board of Management accepts that it is not realistic to have a policy which prohibits pupils from taking phones to school. Not only would it be impractical to forbid pupils from carrying them, but it is believed that a number of parents would be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child were not allowed to carry a phone at all (and might therefore be unable to contact their parents in respect of any situation that might arise on their way to or from school if walking home by themselves).

Expectations for pupils

- The Board encourages parents to request that children leave mobile phones at home as they are valuable and may be lost or stolen.
- Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone to school, the parent must inform the teacher in writing (Appendix A) of the request to bring a phone to school. It is the responsibility of parents to have some form of identification on the device.
- If the school does not have prior notification of devices on the premises the device may be confiscated.
- Children will not be allowed to access any personal device; phones (including smart phones), tablets, smart watches, gaming devices or any other personal digital device during school hours or activities.
- Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone to school, parents must sign the Digital Device Statement (Appendix A) stating their acceptance and compliance with this policy.
- Children's phones must be switched off and put into school bags before entering the grounds and may not be used for any purpose on school grounds.
- Mobile devices must be handed to the class teacher in the morning. They will be securely stored and returned to the pupil at home time.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly, and helped in any appropriate way.

Where a parent feels that their child having a phone in school is essential the following will apply:

- The school accepts no responsibility for replacement or repair of lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones. The safety and security of mobile phones is wholly a matter for pupils/parents.
- The school will not be liable for the replacement or repair of lost, stolen or damaged devices that were confiscated due to noncompliance with this policy.
- The phone must be turned off and stored in school bags before the school day starts (i.e. prior to 8.50 am or from when the child first arrives on school grounds). The phone must then be handed in to the class teacher in the morning to be securely stored and returned to the pupil at home time.
- Digital devices which are not switched off or handed in to the class teacher may be confiscated
 and returned only to the parent/guardian. Devices may be confiscated if children do not comply
 with rules regarding device storage and/or accessing a personal device during school hours or
 school related activities. Where a device has been confiscated the parent will be contacted with
 regard to the return of the device.
- The Digital Device Policy is consistent with the Code of Behaviour Policy and inappropriate use of mobile phones or any digital device will incur sanctions as per the Code of Behaviour policy and/or Anti Bullying Policy.
- Taking photographs, audio or video footage with a mobile phone or electronic device of other
 pupils or teachers or sharing inappropriate messages during the school day or school activities
 will be regarded as serious misbehaviour and sanctions will apply according to the school's Code
 of Behaviour Policy and/or Anti Bullying Policy.
- If a teacher has reason to believe or suspect images, audio or video of other pupils or teachers
 has been taken, the phone/electronic device will be confiscated and not be returned to the pupil
 until the content has been removed by the pupil in the presence of a teacher and
 parents/guardians.
- If a teacher has reason to believe or suspect that a mobile phone/digital device has unsuitable
 material stored on it, pupils will be required to hand over the device to a teacher and
 parents/guardians will be asked to collect it from the school.
- Pupils sending nuisance, vulgar or inappropriate text/picture/video messages is a direct breach
 of the school's acceptable usage policy.
- The unauthorised taking of images, video or audio with a mobile phone camera or electronic device, still or moving, is in direct breach of the school's acceptable usage policy.
- Please see AUP Policy, Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy for further information.

 Where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the Gardaí for further investigation. Parents will be informed in such circumstances.

Digital Devices & Anti Bullying

Parents should note that our Anti Bullying Policy currently states:

"In the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour."

School Trips and Outings

Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones / electronic devices with them on school trips and tours. Parents will be able to contact the teacher in charge via the school office or school mobile

phone. Where children are found to be using digital devices or have them on their person, it will be regarded as serious misbehaviour and sanctions will apply according to the school's Code of Behaviour Policy and/or Anti-Bullying policy.

Guidelines for Staff

- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discreet' mode, with 'vibrate' off.
- Mobile Phones should be kept in a safe, secure place.
- The Aladdin roll should be completed on school devices.
- Mobile phones will not be used for texting or phone calls within teaching / pupil contact time except in the case of emergency.
- Calls for school business e.g. checking a booking for school tour, making arrangements for sporting events etc. should be done on the school phone.
- If a situation arises whereby a staff member needs to be contactable please speak to the Principal or Deputy Principal and necessary arrangements will be put in place. Also ensure you provide persons with the school landline, in case they are unable to contact you.
- School phone / school approved applications should be used to contact parents.

The Board of Management advises all staff to keep their personal mobile phone number and social networking sites private.

Guidelines for Teachers re: confiscation

- A device may be confiscated if it is not switched off on school grounds, handed to class teacher
 in the morning or if accessed during school hours or activities.
- If a device is confiscated parents should be notified by phone or email to inform them of breach of policy and organise return of the device.
- Where a device remains in school overnight, the Principal or Deputy Principal should be notified and the device stored in a safe place e.g. locked drawer, filing cabinet, school safe etc.

Guidelines for Parents

- The Staff and BOM recognise the parents as the child's primary educator and believe that
 parents have an important role to play in ensuring their child's appropriate and safe use of
 electronic devices
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child's online activity / digital
 footprint. Parents are encouraged to check social media apps (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Viber,
 WhatsApp, Instagram etc.) on mobile phones and electronic devices to ensure they are aware of
 their child's online interaction with others and approve of same.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to talk with their child regularly about their use of electronic devices and discuss who their child is interacting with and the content of such interactions.
- Parents are asked to attend internet safety talks held in the school when the opportunity is offered.

Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of electronic devices which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

Support Structures

Navan ETNS endeavours to have support structures in place to ensure the appropriate use of electronic devices in school and to ensure staff, parents and pupils feel supported in same.

- The school will provide Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying talks and links to webinars for parents and guardians to all parents in the school.
- · Community Gardaí link in with classes re Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying.
- Staff will regularly partake in Continuous Professional Development in relation to AUP, internet safety and Cyber Bullying.
- The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

Sanctions

Misuse of electronic devices may result in disciplinary action, as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy

The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Review

This policy was drafted in December 2023 and will be updated in line with department guidelines.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the BOM on

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 29/5/24

Date: 29/5/24

Appendix A

Digital Device Permission form

I wish to inform the school that will b apply):	e in possession of a (please tick all that
○ Mobile/Smart Phone○ Other (please specify)	
Reason for device in school:	
I have read the following and understand all terms in the following	owing school policies (tick when read):
Digital Device PolicyAcceptable Use PolicyCode of Behaviour	
By signing this, I am agreeing to all terms of the Digital Device Code of Behaviour policies. I confirm I as parent/guardian and understand our responsibilities with regards to these policies occur as a result of breaches of these policies.	d my child have read and clearly
Student Signature:	
Parent/Guardian Signature:	_
Nate.	

Appendix B

Internet Safety Advice for Parents

- Be informed about your child's internet use so that going online is a positive experience for you and your child.
- Discover the internet together. Parental/guardian guidance on internet use places your child at an advantage and develops a positive attitude to internet exploration making it easier to share positive and negative experiences in the future.
- Teach your child how to evaluate and criticise the information they read online for truth and accuracy.
- Agree with your child rules for internet use in your home.
 - Discuss an acceptable length of time for your child to use the internet. Experts say that time spent online should not affect sleep, exercise or time with family. Have screen free hours at home.
 - Do not let your child have their internet device in their bedroom. Internet use should be in a common space to encourage openness and to enable monitoring.
- Agree on how to treat personal information. Encourage your child never to give out personal name, address, username, password or location. Check your child's privacy settings and location settings.
- Teach your child to protect their phone with a password and encourage them to share
 the password with you. Starting this practice at a young age can help you gain access to
 your child's virtual world. Keep track of your child's password. You should be able to
 check it whenever you feel you need to, and a condition of them being on any social
 networks should be that they inform you of any password changes.
- Set up a family email address that your child can use when signing in to new games and websites online. When gaming online, encourage your child to use a nickname for their password.
- Agree on what types of sites and activities are OK in your family. Be involved with the sites your child is engaged with and know how they work. Use filtering software designed to help parents limit the web-sites children can access.
- Make sure the games your child is playing are suitable and age appropriate. Call of Duty: Black Ops and Grand Theft Auto or other 15, 18 age-rated games are unsuitable for primary school children. Social media sites like TikTok, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter etc. have an age rating of 13. Primary school children should not to be using them. The digital age of consent in Ireland is 16.
- Discuss how to behave towards others when gaming, chatting, emailing and messaging.
 Encourage your child be responsible for what they post online. Encourage them to own up if they are wrong. We are all learning about responsible internet use. Encourage your child to THINK before they post by asking the questions:
 - Is it true? Is it helpful? Is it illegal? Is it necessary? Is it kind?
- Teach your child that all comments posted online can be traced to the IP address of their internet device. Nothing is anonymous.
- Be aware that some social media sites are set up by unknown groups with different agendas. Your child may be at risk.
- Regularly review the social media app your child is using and the social networking private settings. Many social networks are set to public by default meaning anyone can

- see your child's posts, pictures, videos etc. We recommend using the 'friends only' setting.
- Teach your child that posting a photograph online has ramifications. The image is there
 forever, and it can be passed on and exploited. Children should know that what they
 upload online can follow them around for years beyond the date it was uploaded.
- Teach your child that once you upload any content on the internet it is there permanently and you can never remove it. Anyone could have it saved, forwarded, shared or screenshotted, even if your child has deleted soon afterwards.
- Teach your child that Zoom, Skype, Facetime and other webcam sites are for family and closely selected friends.
- Be careful about allowing your child free access to YouTube as they can gain access to a lot of inappropriate material. Dangerous challenges that are posted on YouTube encourage children to copy them.
- Be aware if your child has posted images or videos of themselves on YouTube or elsewhere online. The Internet has a vast audience. Making a video and posting it on YouTube is dangerous.
- Talk about the risks associated with meeting online 'friends' in person. Teach your child not to meet anyone, stranger or otherwise, without your permission.
- Disable the In-App Purchase function in your phone or device settings. Many apps and games give their users the option of buying additional game functionality, additional points/bonuses etc. Children can easily make purchases without realising.
- Report online material you may consider illegal to the appropriate authorities.
- Encourage respect for others and help stamp out cyber-bullying. Encourage your children to STOP, BLOCK and TELL if they are being cyberbullied. Do not retaliate. Record everything- keep all text messages, keep a note of calls, screen shot images and messages.
- If your child is being cyberbullied:
 - Establish with your child that they can come to you about anything negative that happens to them online, no matter how shocking.
 - Praise your child for coming forward to tell you.
 - Stay calm and don't overreact.
 - Listen supportively, don't interrogate.
 - Establish what has taken place and in what context.
 - Save any evidence, take screenshots etc.
 - Encourage your child not to reply to any messages. Block the user from your child's profile, revisit your child's privacy settings, and delete and block any other 'virtual friends'.
 - Report incidences of cyber-bullying to the website apps or service providers using the reporting tools.
 - Encourage your child to continue to STOP, BLOCK, TELL
 - Talk to your child's teacher. If the cyberbullying is of a very serious nature, you may wish to speak to the Gardaí
- If your child has engaged in cyber-bullying:
 - Keep calm and listen to your child.
 - Establish the facts and find out what role your child played. Even if your child was part of a group with a minor role, it needs to be addressed.
 - Encourage your child to 'own up' to the part that she played. Do not cover up for her.
 She can learn from her mistakes.
 - Talk with your child and help them see where they were wrong. Ask them what better options were available to them.

- o Ask them to think about the victim. Ask them to establish how the victim might feel after the cyber-bullying experience. Encourage empathy.
- o Encourage your child to make a meaningful apology.
- o Do your best to restore the relationship.
- o Monitor your child's interactions online for the foreseeable future.
- For tips on how to use Seesaw and Zoom safely, please refer to the Distance Learning Section of our Acceptable Use Policy
- If you are unsure when it comes to the Internet, gaming, social media and general technology, be open and seek help from the school or friends. We are all learning!

Useful Internet safety sites and links:

www.webwise.ie www.digizen.org

www.esafety.ie

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.netsmatz.org www.zeeko.ie

www.commonsensemedia.ie

http://www.saferinternet.org/ www.internetmatters.org www.saferinternetday.ie