



# **Pelletstown Educate Together National School**

## **Mobile Phone and Smart Devices Policy**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Review due: June 2029

**Pelletstown Educate Together N.S.**  
**Mobile Phone and Smart Devices Policy**  
**2025**

**Introduction:**

This policy was originally devised in 2019, following the publication of Department of Education Circular 0038/2018. It was drafted in consultation with staff, pupils and parents of Pelletstown ETNS. It was reviewed and updated in June 2025, following the school's participation in the Dublin 7 and Dublin 15 Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free Initiative, which followed the publication of the Department of Education's Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free guidelines; <https://assets.gov.ie/283424/d5f331c8-a417-410e-8f8d-1be58518317c.pdf>, as well as Circular 0044/2025; [https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Circ0044\\_MobPhone\\_Ban\\_PrimarySchools\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Circ0044_MobPhone_Ban_PrimarySchools_Final.pdf).

**Rationale:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and outline policy and procedures for the school community regarding mobile phones, smart devices and their uses in the context of the school. It also draws attention to the local community initiative "Dublin 7 and 15, Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free". In addition, it acknowledges the benefits of mobile phones and smart devices, whilst highlighting the risks associated with their use. This policy will build on the existing school policies in this area and will enable children to disconnect from their online world and connect more with their peers for the duration of the school day.

The promotion of digital technologies for teaching, learning and assessment is a priority of the Department of Education and Youth. Research shows that digital technologies can play a positive role in supporting high quality teaching, learning and assessment. The use of technology is now an integral part of the lives of children and young people. The school's Digital Learning Plan and Acceptable Usage Policy outlines how digital technologies will be used in the school to enhance teaching, learning and assessment. Pelletstown ETNS acknowledges the diverse backgrounds of our school community, and the need for technology to communicate with family members not living in Ireland. Pupils are encouraged to do so on *shared family devices* within the home.

However, concerns have been identified including some risks associated with the misuse, abuse and possible overuse of these devices. Children and young people need to be guided and supported to become good digital citizens. Some potential challenges/risks associated with the use of mobile phones and smart devices include:

- Use of mobile phones and smart devices with integrated cameras could lead to child safeguarding, data protection, and indeed criminal issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.
- Mobile phones and smart devices can be valuable items and could potentially be damaged in school or may render a pupil vulnerable to theft. They may also make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have associated negative implications relating to such.
- Mobile phones and other smart devices can be very intrusive, distracting and antisocial when used in a school environment.
- Social media use has been shown to increase mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, and suicidality (particularly among teenage girls), as well as increased feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness among young people.
- Research highlights that adolescents who experience internet addiction are at increased risk of self-harm and suicidal behaviour. It also outlines that poor sleep habits mediated the relationship between night-time mobile phone use and subsequent depressed mood, externalizing behaviours, and decline in self-esteem

## **Aims and Objectives:**

The aim of this policy is:

1. to inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones and smart devices at our school.
2. to outline the procedures and processes associated with this policy
3. to highlight the school's participation in the Dublin 7 and Dublin 15 Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free initiative, and signpost parents/carers for participation in this

## **Definition of Smart Devices:**

A smart device is an electronic device, generally connected to other devices or networks via different wireless protocols such as Bluetooth, NFC, Wi-Fi, LiFi, 3G/4G/5G, etc. Examples of smart devices include but are not limited to iPods, iPads, tablets, smartphones, smart watches, digital cameras, Kindles and gaming devices. A smart device does not apply to a basic phone, or to a basic contact watch, which can make/receive calls but does not connect to the internet or social media.

## **Guidelines:**

The Mobile Phone & Smart Devices Policy is consistent with the school's Relationships and Code of Positive Behaviour, Bí Cineálta (Anti-Bullying) policy, Child Safeguarding, Data Protection and Acceptable Usage Policies. Any inappropriate use of mobile phones and/or smart devices (i.e. any breach of this policy) will be treated in accordance with these policies.

## **Pupils:**

### **SMART DEVICES:**

- Pupils are not permitted to bring smart devices to school. These include, but are not limited to iPods, iPads, tablets, smart watches, digital cameras, mobile phones, Kindles, gaming devices.
- In exceptional circumstances, members of the ISM (In-School Management) Team, in consultation with teaching staff, may give permission to pupils to bring and use smart devices in school.

### **SMART PHONES:**

- Pupils do not need mobile phones at school and we request pupils not to bring them to school. We ask for parents' co-operation in this matter.
- Pupils from Junior Infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class are not permitted to bring a mobile phone to school, under any circumstances, whether a smart phone or a basic phone/watch.
- If a parent feels that their child genuinely needs to bring a phone/watch to school, this will be permitted from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class. In such a case, parents must complete the permission form (Appendix 1) in full and return it to the school before their child brings a mobile phone to school.
- Following the school's participation in the "Dublin 7 and Dublin 15 Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free" community initiative, permission for children to bring *smartphones* to school will be phased out. Parents are encouraged to choose a basic phone/watch instead, such as those outlined in Appendix 2.

The following applies for 3<sup>rd</sup> class – 6<sup>th</sup> class in the coming years,

	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Class</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Class</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> Class</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Class</b>
<b>2025-2026</b>	No smartphones permitted	Smartphones permitted, but basic phone/watch encouraged as an alternative.	Smartphones permitted, but basic phone/watch encouraged as an alternative.	Smartphones permitted, but basic phone/watch encouraged as an alternative.
<b>2026-2027</b>	No smartphones permitted	No smartphones permitted	Smartphones permitted, but basic phone/watch encouraged as an alternative.	Smartphones permitted, but basic phone/watch encouraged as an alternative.
<b>2027-2028</b>	No smartphones permitted	No smartphones permitted	No smartphones permitted	Smartphones permitted, but basic phone/watch encouraged as an alternative.
<b>2028-2029</b>	No smartphones permitted for all classes			

- If a mobile phone is deemed absolutely necessary and the relevant form has been signed, pupils must adhere to the following procedures:

- 1. Switch off their phone at the outer school gates/doors, when entering the school grounds in the morning.**
- 2. The phone can be switched on again at the outer gates/doors, when they leave the school grounds.**
- 3. At 8.30am the pupil must give their phone to their class teacher to lock away until 2.10pm.**
- 4. Children can collect their phone from their teacher at 2.10pm, or on a half day, 11:45am.**
- 5. Pupils may not bring their phone on school trips or events. They are also not permitted on the school grounds after school hours, including during after-school activities.**
- 6. It is the pupil's responsibility to hand up and collect their phone each day.**

- If any pupil brings a mobile phone to school, without permission from parents, that phone will be confiscated and kept in the office until a parent comes to collect it.
- Even with permission, if a pupil is found with/using a phone during school hours, or if their phone rings/beeps in the classroom, that phone will also be taken to the office and the parents will be asked to come and collect the phone.
- In the event of the pupil continuously breaking the above rules, the Principal/ISLT will inform parents that the pupil is no longer permitted to bring their mobile phone to school.



## 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/carers are encouraged to regularly check their child's mobile phone/smart devices activity. Parents are encouraged to participate in the Dublin 7 and Dublin 15 Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free initiative, which collectively should make it easier for parents/carers not to purchase a smartphone for their child.
- Parents/carers should check and ensure their child adheres to the appropriate/legal age settings for social media apps (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, Tik Tok etc.), as well as monitoring their child's use of same devices to ensure they are aware of their child's online interaction with others and approve of same.
- Parents/carers 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 encouraged to attend internet safety talks held in the school.
- Parents must complete a Mobile Phone consent form in full and return it to the school if they wish their child to be permitted to bring a mobile phone to school.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the **only point of contact** to ensure their child is reached quickly, and helped in any appropriate way. This is also the point of contact should the school or a pupil need to contact a parent.
- If a staff member has reason to believe that a mobile phone has unsuitable material stored on it, pupils will be required to hand over the phone to a teacher and parents will be asked to collect it from the school. 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.
- The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones (including at school, and travelling to and from school). The safety and security of mobile phones is wholly a matter for pupils/parents
- Parents are not permitted to use their own mobile phones for photographic purposes on the school grounds, with the exception of only photographing their own child. This is for reasons of Data Protection and Child Safeguarding.
- Where parents do provide a mobile phone for their child, they are strongly encouraged to buy a **basic phone only**, rather than a smart phone with a camera and access to internet and social media platforms (see table above for phasing out for Smart phones being permitted at school).

## Staff:

- Staff working directly with children must keep their phones on 'silent' during teaching time/yard duty.
- Phone calls may not be made or taken and text messages may not be sent or read during teaching time/yard duty unless in exceptional circumstances, and where the staff member has informed a member of the ISLT team, where possible.
- If a staff member needs to make/take an important call they may organise supervision for their pupils and leave the room to do so.
- In certain situations, staff may use their phone during lessons to access lesson content/resources/other school-related material when it is not possible to access the teaching PC.
- Teachers are encouraged to be discerning in their use of mobile phones as an educational tool during class.
- Staff should view themselves as role-models for the appropriate use of mobile phones in front of pupils.
- Staff members who use their mobile phones/smart device to take photographs of pupils/their work must consult the Data Protection policy in this regard. All such photos must be deleted by the end of that week and uploaded to the school's password protected Google Drive where relevant. Staff are also responsible for ensuring that all such photos are also deleted from their 'recently deleted' album, where relevant.
- Staff members must never upload photos/videos of pupils to a staff Whatsapp group or to any other platforms of their personal social media.

### **Consultation and communication regarding the plan:**

This policy was drawn up in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The attention of all new families will be drawn to this policy upon registration in the school. All new and staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Deputy Principal and NQT mentor.

This policy will be published on the school website and made available to pupils and parents and be subject to ongoing review as needed.

### **Ratification of the plan:**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025, and will be reviewed in June 2029. It may be reviewed at an earlier date, to reflect changes in legislation or in other school policies (e.g. review of Child Safeguarding or Data Protection policies).

Signed:  (Chairperson, BOM) Date: 19/6/25

Signed:  (School Principal) Date: 19/6/25

Name of Pupil:	
Pupil's mobile phone number: <i>(for policy monitoring, Child Safeguarding and Anti-Bullying):</i>	
<p><b>I believe that my child needs to bring their mobile phone to school each day because:</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px; margin-top: 10px;"></div> <p><b><u>I agree that my child will:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Switch off his/her phone each morning before they enter the school grounds and will give it to their class teacher at 8.30am.</li> <li>● Collect their phone from their teacher at home time.</li> <li>● Have their phone confiscated if it is used inappropriately. The phone will be kept in the office until I collect it.</li> <li>● Follow all the procedures and rules outlined in the PETNS Acceptable Use Policy and Relationships and Code of Positive Behaviour Policy in relation to the use of mobile phones and smart devices.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>I agree to:</u></b> all guidelines, procedures and rules set out in the school's Mobile Phone and Smart Devices policy, including that the school takes no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged phones (either at school, or on the way to and from school)</p> <p><b><u>I am aware of the Dublin 7 and Dublin 15 Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free initiative.</u></b></p>	
Signature of Parent/Carer:	
Signature of Pupil:	
Date:	

**Ideas for alternatives to Smartphones can be found at these links:**

1. <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/alternatives>
2. <https://smartphonefree.ie/starter-phones/>

For example;

**Basic Phones:**



**Nokia 5710 £74.99 ↗**

- Like an iPod with in-built wireless earbuds which charge when not in use
- Inbuilt mp3 player with storage for thousands of songs
- Inbuilt speaker
- Wireless FM radio
- Great sound quality
- Great battery life
- No wifi or whatsapp



**Nokia 110**

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