

MOBILE PHONE POLICY



OMAGH HIGH SCHOOL - MOBILE PHONE POLICY

1. CONTEXT

“Every school should have a clear policy on the use of Mobile Phones on its premises, and make it clear that any abuse - such as using these phones to bully and humiliate - will be dealt with severely.”
Minister for Education and Young People, Feb '07.

Omagh High School recognises that students regularly use electronic devices and that many parents wish their children to carry mobile phones to enhance their safety before and after school and on journeys to and from school. Omagh High School aims to develop a culture of responsible use of mobile phones and other digital devices by pupils.

Omagh High School further recognises that there are many benefits and learning opportunities to be gained from the use of technology such as mobile phones and other digital devices. However, the increasing technical sophistication of these telephones raises the following issues and challenges which the school management must address:

- 1.1 Research has shown that mobile telephones may impact on the health of young people;ⁱ
- 1.2 Mobile telephones represent a serious nuisance and form of disruption when they are left switched on in teaching areas or any other public forum within the school grounds;
- 1.3 Examination Boards have highlighted the security issues regarding mobile telephones and public examinations;ⁱⁱ
- 1.4 Research has shown that some students experience bullying through the use of text and picture messaging via mobile telephones;ⁱⁱⁱ
- 1.5 Picture messaging is being used to send pornographic images via mobile telephones,
- 1.6 Picture telephones with built-in or attached digital cameras are being used to take pictures and videos without the subject knowing and many of these are appearing on websites. Such pictures can be digitally stored and manipulated as required.

2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

2.1 There are a number of aspects of the law that may apply to the misuse of mobile phones and other digital devices, and the response to that misuse. This will depend on the circumstances of individual cases. In the most serious cases there may be a crime involved – filming an assault, circulation of pornographic images of a child, copyright infringement or nuisance calls.

2.2 Offences may fall under Data Protection Act 2018.

3. STUDENTS

3.1 Students are advised that mobile telephones should not be brought to school and that the school is not liable for theft, loss or damage of telephones or other similar property belonging to students.

3.2 Parents should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school.

3.3 Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones in school or during formal school events taking place at other locations. **If it is felt necessary to bring a mobile phone to school it must be placed in a school locker as soon as the pupil arrives in school and left there until the pupil leaves school. Mobile phones are not to be used at any point during the school day or on the school premises.**

3.4 Students are responsible for ensuring that their mobile telephones are switched off.

3.5 Students are prohibited from using any mobile telephone for the purpose of taking, storing or sending still digital images and / or video clips. This includes any mobile telephone or similar device which may store digital images or text messages.

3.6 Students and parents are reminded that in cases of an emergency, the school office remains the appropriate point of contact. Pupils are permitted to use the telephone in the school office in cases of emergency (e.g. missed bus, lift home fails to arrive etc.)

3.7 The recording, storing and / or transmission of digital images within the school grounds is strictly prohibited.

3.8 Students must not bring mobile telephones into any formal or public examination, switching off a telephone will not be sufficient on such occasions. Such an infringement of this regulation could mean disqualification from the current examination.

3.9 Students engaged on out of school visits must abide by the regulations set out for the visit and uphold at all times details set out by the teacher in charge. Phones must not be used to record images while in the care of the school.

3.10 Failure to observe the above rules will result in the immediate confiscation of the mobile telephone by the teacher observing or detecting the breach of this rule. The pupil will automatically be placed in an after school detention.

- 3.11 When a student has his/her telephone confiscated the teacher will bring the mobile phone to the main office where a member of the administrative staff will log the date and time of confiscation along with the name and class of the student.
- 3.12 The phone will be securely stored in the main office.
- 3.13 If a phone has been confiscated, then the confiscated phone may only be collected from the main office by a parent during office hours. Office hours are detailed in the Homework Diary.
- 3.14 This policy applies to the use of any similar device, for example, 'smart' watches.

4. SANCTIONS

- 4.1 Persistent breaking of this rule will be regarded as a breach of discipline and will invoke the School's Disciplinary Procedures.

5. OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Childnet International

Childnet International is a children's charity committed to helping to make the Internet a safe place for children. Information for parents to help keep their children safe online may be found on their website: <http://www.childnet-int.org/>.

ICSTIS

ICSTIS, the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services, is the industry-funded regulatory body for all premium rate charged telephone services. <http://www.icstis.org.uk/>

Footnotes:

ⁱ World Health Organisation – www.who.int;
National Radiological Protection Board – www.nrpb.org.uk

ⁱⁱ CCEA – www.ccea.org.uk

ⁱⁱⁱ EA Policy on Bullying www.eani.org.uk
Bullying Online - www.bullying.co.uk/children/mobile_phone.htm;
Department of Education - <http://safety.ngfl.gov.uk/schools/document.php3?D=d70>