



MARICOURT
CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL
& SIXTH FORM CENTRE

MOBILE PHONE AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

Mission Statement

Maricourt seeks to provide a living Catholic community which is rooted in Christian values and where growth and knowledge, respect love and fellowship are shared by all.

INSPIRE
WITH
MARICOURT

POLICY REVIEWED: Nov 2019
SCHEDULED REVIEW: Sep 2022

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Introduction

Mobile phones are a part of everyday society and Maricourt High School accepts that many students do possess mobile phones and other electronic devices. The school also acknowledges that mobile phones are a useful tool, particularly where the issue of safety on the journey between home and school is concerned.

However, all staff and students at school have a right to be physically and emotionally safe. This right can be threatened by the misuse of mobile phones/electronic devices. In addition, teachers have a right to teach and students have a right to learn in a school environment which is free from interruption by mobile phones or other electronic devices.

Objectives

This policy intends to introduce and maintain:

- A positive, safe approach to mobile phones and other electronic devices in the school whilst minimising the disruptive impact on teaching and learning.
- A system that encourages our students to be responsible for and care for their personal possessions.
- A process that introduces appropriate action in response to the misuse of mobile phones and other electronic devices in the school.

Possession and use of Mobile Phones in a Centre for Learning

Mobile phones and other electronic devices in the school present a number of challenges, particularly around the misuse of these devices. Though bullying, intimidation and harassment are not new in society; bullying using a mobile phone represents a new challenge for the school to manage. The ever-increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology increases the possibilities of the misuse of these devices.

It is the responsibility of the school to promote the safe and responsible use of mobile phones and other electronic devices in the school during the school day. Whilst the school would prefer students not to have mobile phones and other electronic devices whilst on site, we realise that this cannot cover the period when students are travelling to and from school. It is against the above background that the following policy is adopted.

Policy Statement

Students are discouraged from bringing mobile phones and other electronic devices to the school, especially on days when they have practical lessons when any facility to keep these devices securely about their person is more difficult, e.g. PE, DT, Science.

Students are reminded that they are able to use the school phone to contact their parents for appropriate reasons, e.g staying late for an extra-curricular club.

Parents/carers are reminded that urgent messages can and should be transmitted via the school reception so that staff as well as students can take supportive action.

If parents/carers permit their children to bring a mobile phone or other electronic device to the school the following will apply:

- The school cannot accept responsibility for mobile devices
- Mobile phones/ other devices may not be used at any time during the school day on the school premises.
- Parents/carers needing to contact students should do so through the school office reception 0151-330-3366
- Mobile phones and other electronic devices must be switched off and out of sight at all times.

If a phone rings, or is seen by a member of staff, whether it is on or not, or if inappropriate use is made of the phone/electronic device then the following procedure will be followed:

- The device will be confiscated by the member of staff. Students can collect their device between 3.30 and 3.45pm that from the designated place on the site it was confiscated.
- All offences will be logged by staff to enable us to monitor the situation and to respond accordingly.
- Any student refusing to hand the device over to a member of staff will be sanctioned via the school's consequence system and the parent/carer will be contacted.

Wires, ear pieces etc., must not be used, or visible, in school.

Any student involved in a public examination must hand their mobile phone in prior to entering the examination room. It will be stored securely for the duration of the exam. This also applies to any wearable devices electronic such as smart watches or other electronic equipment.

MP3 players, mobile phones and other electronic equipment are not covered by the school's insurance policy, and parents/carers must ensure that they have adequate insurance for their child's possessions.

This policy sits alongside the Acceptable Use Policy which all students sign and which is shared with parents and carers. This also gives clear guidance to staff, students and parents about the consequences for breaches of the Policy.

Dealing with breaches of the Policy

The school, in agreement with the Governing Body, will impose sanctions for the misuse of a mobile phone other electronic device in the school. Misuse of the mobile phone/other device will be dealt with using the same principles set out in the School Behaviour Policy, with the response being proportionate to the severity of the misuse. For example, consequences may include detention, isolation, exclusion.

Students should be aware that if there is serious misuse then the offence will be reported to the police and this may lead to the lengthy confiscation of their mobile phone/other device. There will be communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions up to and including exclusion from school.

The school will ensure all staff know the correct procedure to follow where a mobile phone/electronic device has been confiscated. This will ensure that the confiscation is correctly recorded and that the phone/electronic device is kept securely.

Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone or other device this will be done by a designated member of staff, with a second member of staff present. The action will be properly recorded in case it later becomes evidence of criminal activity. This record will include the date and time, the type of device, who was present and what was found.

Unacceptable use and Serious breach

The school will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of a mobile phone/electronic device and a serious breach of the School's Behaviour Policy resulting in sanctions being taken.

- Photographing or filming other students or staff without their knowledge or permission
- Photographing or filming in toilets, swimming pools and changing rooms and similar areas
- Bullying, harassing or intimidating students or staff by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging, sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites
- Refusing to switch a device off or handing over the device at the request of a member of staff
- Using the mobile phone/device outside school hours to intimidate or upset students or staff will be considered a breach of the policy in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time
- Any involvement in the deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook or YouTube
- The use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages/emails)
- Up-skirting

- Students posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about other students or school staff
- General disruption to learning caused by students accessing phones or other devices in lessons
- Students phoning parents/carers immediately after an incident so that the ability of staff to deal fairly and appropriately with an incident is compromised
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable students, where this may put them at additional risk.

Consequences

Appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of either the acceptable use policy or the school's behaviour policy.

In addition:

- Students and their parents/carers should be very clear that the school is within its rights to confiscate the phone/electronic device where the policy has been breached.
- Students and their parents/carers should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected and a lengthy confiscation of the device may be imposed
- If a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student, member of staff or the wider community, the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. The school will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction in discussion with the Governing Body.

Confiscation procedure

If a mobile phone/other device is confiscated then:

- The student will be informed that the device can be collected at the end of the school day from the designated place. The student will be required to sign for the return of the device.
- The confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log for monitoring purposes
- The school will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored securely and in such a way that it is returned to the correct person

Where the phone or other device has been used for an unacceptable purpose

- The Headteacher or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in/on confiscated equipment and will be permitted to delete any files which are in clear breach of this policy unless these are being preserved as evidence

- If required, evidence of the offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure. The Online Safety Officer will be involved
- The school will consider whether an incident should be reported to the school Designated Safeguarding Officer
- The designated staff member will monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.

Support for the victim

Where an incident has involved the victimisation, harassment, alarm or distress of another student or member of staff, the school will provide support for the victim. This will be discussed with the victim's family or where the incident involves a member of staff, appropriate support will be obtained. This might be the designated staff, welfare person or the victim's union.

To support the rehabilitation of a victim the following support may be offered in consultation with the victim and his/her family or support person.

The school may:

- Follow up with the victim and family and agree a suitable way forward to facilitate an effective closure for the victim to the incident
- Implement the institution's 'restorative practice' procedures. Where the perpetrator agrees, participation in this process will be included as part of their reintegration programme following the incident
- Where 'restorative practice' does not take place then other avenues to support the victim will be tried e.g. Cybermentors, Childline, Bullybusters
- The school will also ensure that the perpetrator, and any others involved, are educated about the impact of their actions on the victim
- The school will ensure a fully documented case history of the incident is recorded and secured in the relevant area of the institution's Management Information Systems
- If deemed appropriate by the school staff, an education programme will be implemented
- Where material has been posted online about a victim, the school will provide support in getting the material removed either through discussion with the person who has posted the material or through contact with the service provider.

This policy will be subject to regular review and updating in order to ensure that the personal safety of students and the school staff is protected and that the learning environment is not disturbed by current or emerging technology.