



DOMINICAN COLLEGE

MOBILE COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Board of Management of Dominican College, Taylor's Hill, Galway, accepts that parents give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 The widespread ownership of mobile phones and other communication/recording devices among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, and parents take steps to ensure that they are used responsibly at schools. This policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving the use of such devices can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that these devices provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.

2.2 This policy for mobile phones and other communication/recording devices also applies to students during school trips and extra-curricular activities.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 This policy aims to ensure the safe and appropriate use of mobile communication devices and prevent disruption of school life and reduce the incidents of abuse of others. The policy will:

- Ensure no student, member of staff or person associated with the school need suffer unwanted caricature by others
- Reduce disruption of class due to phones/cameras etc.
- Reduce distraction of students in class due to phones/cameras etc.
- Ensure students will not use cameras in school to record or photograph staff or other students
- Minimize time spent by staff and management in dealing with breaches of conduct policy

- Ensure that cyber-bullying does not take place through the use of mobile communication devices
- Ensure that students and staff in the school are free from abusive, hurtful or inappropriate communication through the use of mobile communication devices
- Eliminate the tendency for students to compete with the latest technology.

4. MOBILE COMMUNICATION DEVICES USE

4.1 The use of mobile phone technology and other communication and recording technologies gives rise to possible dangers and problems that may arise from their use within the school. These include:

- Bullying of students and staff through SMS, MMS, social networks or other means.
- Possession or transmission of inappropriate/unlawful images.
- Photographic, video or audio recording of other students or staff.
- Causing a general nuisance in class or around the school.
- Causing a disturbance or distraction in class.
- Accessing inappropriate websites on the internet.
- Possible theft of phones and the resultant loss of time to staff due to investigations.

4.2 The school allows the possession of mobile phones and other forms of mobile communication technologies within the school but only when their possession and use adheres to the following rules:

- 4.2.1 Phones and other such devices may not be used or taken out while on the school premises or at a school activity that takes place off-site from the time students enter the school premises in the morning until the end of the school day. Phones and other communication devices must be turned off during these times. It is not sufficient to set the devices on silent mode. Students are permitted to use their phones after the end of the final class of the day as they may need to contact parents in relation to extra-curricular events and other after-school activities.
- 4.2.2 Students must not use mobile phones to ring, text or otherwise communicate parents/guardians during the course of the school day. All contact with home must be carried out through the school office.
- 4.2.3 Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students or staff is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour.
- 4.2.4 Any mobile phone or communication/recording device seen in the possession of a student during the school day, while on school trips or during any other

school related activity including detention, will be confiscated immediately by a member of staff. SIM cards and memory cards must also be handed in when a mobile phone is being confiscated.

- 4.2.5 Confiscated phones or communication/recording devices will be placed in a sealed envelope and kept in the Principal's office. This will only be returned when the relevant student's parent comes into the school to collect the phone. Repeated incidents of unauthorised mobile phone or communication/recording device use may result in longer periods of confiscation to be determined by the Principal.
- 4.2.6 Failure to hand a mobile phone to a member of staff when requested may result in a suspension from school.
- 4.2.7 The use of a mobile phone or communication/recording device to take unauthorised photographs, video or audio recordings within school or while on a school related trip/activity may result in immediate suspension from school. It may also result in the confiscation of the device for a period of time to be decided by the Principal and/or Board of Management.
- 4.2.8 Any student/s caught using a mobile phone or communication/recording device to cheat in exams or assessments will face disciplinary action. Students doing so in state exams will face serious consequences as specified by the State Examinations Commission.
- 4.2.9 On occasion, students may be given permission by teachers to use their phones or recording/communicating devices as part of a lesson or school activity. On such occasions, and where such explicit permission has been given, students may use their phone for the purpose and limited duration allowed.
- 4.2.10 Students attending after-school study, detention or other after-school activities may use their phones to call/text parents if necessary between the end of school and the start of the activity. They may not use their phone during the after-school activity.
- 4.3 The Board of Management reserves the right to allow the Principal or other teacher to ask a pupil to show them the contents of their mobile phone or communication/recording device.
- 4.4 The Board of Management reserves the right to deal with incidents of aggressive, threatening, abusive, demeaning or inappropriate language, images or other digital content using mobile communication/recording devices that occur at a location,

function or program that is not school related if in the opinion of the Principal or Board of Management, this activity has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim and/or has substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

5. THEFT OR DAMAGE

5.1 Students should mark their mobile phone or similar device clearly with their names.

5.2 Students who bring a mobile phone or similar device to school should leave it locked away in their locker/bag when they arrive. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile phones or similar devices are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.

5.3 Mobile phones or similar devices that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to the school office.

5.4 The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones or similar devices.

5.5 The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones or similar devices stolen while travelling to and from school.

5.6 It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers secret.

6. SANCTIONS

6.1 Students who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phones or other device confiscated by teachers. The device will be placed in an envelope and held in the Principal's office until it is collected and signed for by a parent/guardian. In the case of repeated infringements of this policy or for more serious infractions of this policy the mobile phone or communication/recording device may be confiscated for a longer period as deemed appropriate by the Principal and/or Board of Management.

6.2 Repeated infringements may result in the withdrawal of the agreement to allow the student to bring the mobile telephone to school and may result in suspension.

6.3 Failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident being referred to the Gardaí for investigation. In such cases, the parent or guardian will be notified immediately.

6.4 Students who use their mobile phones or other devices to take photographs, videos or audio recordings of students, staff or visitors may be suspended with immediate effect or be subject to other sanctions.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Dominican College on 9th December 2013.