



CARRICKFERGUS GRAMMAR SCHOOL MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

Carrickfergus Grammar School	Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices Policy
Date ratified	August 2023
Date implemented	August 2023
Date to be reviewed	August 2024

This policy has been devised with the primary purpose of safeguarding all members of the school community, and particularly the adults and children who work and study within the school premises on a daily basis. It is everyone's right to feel safe within our school environment. However, when students freely use electronic devices such as smart phones which may contain cameras and access to social media applications on school premises, it significantly compromises the school's ability to safeguard the school community effectively.

Use of mobile phones and electronic devices at all times during the school day, including break and lunch, can distract students from a focus on the core purpose of learning and may significantly limit opportunities for social interaction. Research across the globe from a range of study designs have found that there can be a significant negative impact on students using their mobile phones. These range from hindering academic performance, increasing rates of bullying, decreasing wellbeing and reducing sleep quantity and quality. (<https://blog.innerdrive.co.uk/world-mobile-phone-research>),

This policy reflects the above rationale.

1. Students may bring mobile phones onto school premises but these must remain invisible, inaudible and switched off on school premises (inside and outside) between the hours of 8:00am and 3:30pm (2:25pm on a Friday Week 2). This policy also applies to other electronic devices, including smart watches which send as well as receive text messages and which interact with social media applications.
2. Mobile phones and all other electronic devices, if brought into school, should be kept switched off, not on silent. They should be kept in bags or lockers where they are not visible. Use of mobile devices at break and lunch and between classes is strictly forbidden, as indicated in the timeframes outlined in point 1.
3. Watches which send as well as receive text messages and which interact with social media applications must not be worn in school, not least due to strict national guidelines on testing, assessment and examinations.

4. Mobile phones may not be used in private study, either in the Grainger Centre or elsewhere.
5. If a student uses an electronic device in a lesson or study environment, or a phone is audible or visible, the device will be confiscated and a detention will be issued. Confiscation guidelines as outlined in Point 7 will apply.
6. If a student uses an electronic device on school premises at break and lunch, between classes and after 8:00am / before 3.30pm outside of lessons, the phone will be confiscated and a detention will be issued. Confiscation guidelines as outlined in Point 7 will apply. Students are not to use phones during the school day to communicate with parents. Students are reminded that – if they have an issue – their first resort is to speak with a member of staff, who will then contact parents if necessary. If it transpires that a student has contacted a parent without permission through use of a mobile phone, sanctions similar to the ones outlined above may occur. Parents are reminded that they can ring the School Office if they need to get an urgent message to their child. See section entitled ‘Contact to and from home’ below.
7. If a phone is confiscated by a member of staff, it will be handed into the Main Office, where the student’s name and the date of the breach will be recorded. On the first confiscation, the phone will automatically be retained overnight and handed back at the end of the following day to a parent / guardian between 3:30pm and 4:30pm. On the second confiscation, the phone will be retained for a full week (7 days) and handed back to a parent / guardian at the end of the 7 days. On the third confiscation, it will be treated as a repeated breach of school rules, and a formal suspension may occur.
8. Mobile phones, smartwatches and any other similar electronic devices (e.g. ipods, MP3/4 players) must not be taken into external examinations under any circumstances. Examination Boards reserve the right to take severe action against any candidate who disregards the well-publicised rules governing the integrity of examinations.
9. It is absolutely forbidden to take a photo, video or audio recording of a member of staff or pupil using a non-school device. School-owned devices such as digital cameras will be available for such occasions.
10. School will suspend with immediate effect any student who makes or shares a video, social media resource or other technological asset which includes images of or comments on members of staff – even if these images are publicly available on places such as the school website.
11. Use of phones and other electronic devices during off-site educational visits will be at the discretion of the members of staff leading the trip.

Contact to and from home

- Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones to contact their parents/guardians while in school between the hours of 8:00am and 3:30pm.
- If a student has an issue, they should alert a member of staff in school who will make a professional judgement call on next steps.

- If a student needs to contact their parents/guardians urgently, they will be allowed to call from the Main Office.
- If parents need to contact children urgently, they should phone the Main Office (028 93363615) and a message will be relayed. Parents are asked not to message, call or receive calls from their child while students are on the school premises.
- The school reserves the right to sanction a student who has used their phone to contact home about an issue, without first speaking with a member of staff in school about it.

Responsibility for mobile phones

Carrickfergus Grammar School accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects relating to mobile phones. It is the responsibility of parents and students to ensure mobile phones are properly used and insured. This also applies to other electronic items.