



GLASTRY COLLEGE

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Mobile Phone Policy

Enrich, Empower, Excel



Enrich through Learning

Empower to Succeed

Excel in Life

1. Purpose

- The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly. This Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.
- Glastry College has established the following Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions regarding mobile phones.
- Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the Mobile Phone Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to school.
- The Mobile Phone Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extracurricular activities both on the school ground and off-site.

2. Rationale

- The school recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.
- Glastry College accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also concern about commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents/guardians reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently before or after school core hours.

3. Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this document.
- The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.
- Parents/carers should be aware that if their child takes a mobile phone to school it is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.
- Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached in a relevant and appropriate way. **All contact made between parents and pupils during the school day should be via the school office.**

4. Acceptable Uses

- Mobile phones should be switched off and stored safely in schoolbags upon entering the school premises, during classroom lessons and while moving between lessons. Parents/carers are requested that in cases of emergency they contact the school office first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make any necessary arrangements.
- **Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones during the school day.**
- Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.

5. Unacceptable Uses

- Mobile phones should not be used to take photos or video recordings, send images or messages before or after school core hours, which may cause upset or harm to pupils. Using a mobile phone to do so will lead to disciplinary action.
- The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones.

- Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping. They should be turned off when entering the school grounds and remain off throughout the school day and stored safely in pupils' bags.
- Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. In some cases, it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given. Using a mobile phone to do so will lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- It is forbidden for a student, or students, to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student, and then send the pictures to other students, or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any student or member of staff without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.
- Mobile phones are not to be used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the college.
- It is unacceptable to take a picture of a member of staff without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked, and expected, to delete those images, and relevant college sanctions will be applied.
- Headphones/earphones should not be used whilst moving around the school site during the school day.

6. Theft or damage

- Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.
- To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.
- Mobile phones that are found in the school, and whose owner cannot be located, should be handed to the Reception Office.
- The college accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- The college accepts no responsibility for students who lose, or have their mobile phone stolen, while travelling to and from school.
- 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 confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.

7. Inappropriate Conduct

- Under JCQ regulations, mobile phones are banned from all examinations. Students MUST store their phone safely and switched off in their school bag before entering the exam hall. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.
- Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action.
- Students with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile phones to bully other students may face disciplinary action. (It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the college may consider it appropriate to involve the PSNI.)
- Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain inappropriate images. The transmission of such images may be a criminal offence.
- Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence, and will be dealt with in line with guidance from the CPSS and the PSNI.

8. Sanctions

The following sanctions may be used in consultation and conjunction with the E-Safety and ICT Policy, and the Disciplinary, Anti Bullying, Child Protection and Safe Guarding Policies. Each violation of the Mobile Phone Policy will be dealt with on an individual basis, taking into consideration the circumstances and the events surrounding the incident. Sanctions applied will be in conjunction with the College Disciplinary Policy. The Principal shall decide, based on the evidence provided, the most appropriate sanction if and when the Mobile Phone Policy is violated. Those actions that are deemed as serious may lead to suspension or expulsion. For minor offences the following procedure will be applied:

- Students who infringe the rules set out in this document will have their phones confiscated by teachers. If the phone is being used inappropriately, the student must give it to a teacher if requested.
- On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone will be confiscated by the teacher and sent to the reception in an envelope clearly marked with the pupil's name, teacher's name and date confiscated, where it will be collected by parents after 4.30pm. Details of this will be recorded in the Mobile Phone Log. A text message will be sent out to parents to inform them of this.
- On the second infringement the pupil will receive a formal afterschool detention.
- Any further infringements of the mobile phone policy may result in a ban on bringing a mobile phone to school, for an agreed period of time by the Principal of the College.

TEN TIPS TO STOP TEXT BULLYING

The tips below are aimed at students and are based on extensive research and expertise.

- **ALWAYS TELL SOMEONE YOU TRUST WHAT'S HAPPENING.** This could be your parents, carer, teacher or friend. This might help you feel better and the person may also be able to help you to find a way to stop it altogether.
- **YOU MAY NEED TO TELL THE LOCAL PSNI.** It's against the law to make a call or send a text or email that's really abusive or menacing, or to keep sending messages that will annoy someone or make them anxious. The sender could get fined or even go to prison.
- **NEVER REPLY TO THE BULLY OR SEND AN EVEN NASTIER MESSAGE BACK.** Often bullies will send a message to get a reaction, so don't respond to it. Bullies who don't get a reaction often get bored and stop.
- **KEEP AND SAVE MESSAGES.** If there's a website, online voting site, weblog or message board that says bad things about you, save a copy or print it off. The internet service provider (ISP) that hosts the site should have an email address or helpline where you can send the copy and ask them to get rid of it. It might be a good idea to ask a trusted adult to help you contact the ISP.
- **TAKE A BREAK FROM YOUR PHONE OR COMPUTER FOR A FEW DAYS.** Let your phone take messages and don't chat or check texts or emails. If you really need to make calls, find out if your phone can turn off incoming texts for a while. The bully might just get bored and stop.
- **MAKE SURE ONLY GOOD FRIENDS AND FAMILY ARE IN YOUR PHONE OR EMAIL ADDRESS BOOK.** If you don't recognise a number, caller ID or email, leave it and get a trusted adult to check it later.
- **IF YOU REALLY LIKE USING A CHATROOM, YOU COULD SIGN UP AGAIN WITH A DIFFERENT CHAT ID.** Use a nickname and don't give out any of your personal info. Hold back for a bit in the chat room until you're sure the bully's gone.
- **ALWAYS BE CAREFUL WHO YOU GIVE OR LEND YOUR MOBILE TO.** Always be careful about giving out your mobile phone number, especially if you change it – never give out your number in an internet chat room. You don't know who else might be online and watching.
- **YOUR MOBILE PHONE PROVIDER CAN HELP YOU BY CHANGING YOUR NUMBER IF YOU START GETTING BULLIED THROUGH YOUR PHONE.**
- **KEEP TELLING YOURSELF: 'THIS BULLYING IS WRONG.** It's not my fault and I'm not putting up with it!' You are not alone.

ADVICE

For Parents

- Talk to your child and try to understand the problem.
- Don't be alarmist. While mobile phone bullying can be a problem, for the majority of young people use of mobile phones can bring many benefits.
- For more details on what you or your child can do, who you can talk to and how you can stop mobile bullying, please visit: www.stopbullying.gov

For Students

- If you are not comfortable talking to an adult or friend, or perhaps want to remain anonymous, there are several free helplines that can offer advice:

Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC: 0808 8005 000

If a young person just needs to talk about how they feel, they can also call the Samaritans any time on

08457 909090 or email jo@samaritans.org

FamilyWorks is a local counselling service based in Newtownards. They can be contacted on

028 91 820341

Mobile phone operators will also be able to help if the bullying is happening via a mobile phone.

Contact your own mobile provider for further information.