



St Thomas of Aquin's High School

Mobile Phones and Other Digital Devices in Schools – Summary of CEC Policy

“Any kind of violence or the filming of violence in schools is totally unacceptable. Irresponsible use of mobile phones cannot and will not be tolerated. Staff and parents need to know that action will be taken against those who misuse mobile phones in schools. Pupils need to know the consequences of misuse.”

Minister for Education and Young People (Feb 2007)

Preamble

National consensus and the view of the City of Edinburgh Council is that imposing an outright ban on bringing mobile phones and digital devices into schools would not be appropriate. Mobile phones and digital devices may have a part to play in securing pupils' personal safety before and after school and on journeys to and from school. Moreover a ban would be difficult to enforce and would not be consistent with the aim of developing a culture of responsible use of mobile phone and other digital devices by pupils.

Every member of staff working with children has a duty of care. It is therefore imperative that appropriate action is taken to protect and safeguard their health, development and welfare.

Purpose of this Policy

St Thomas of Aquin's High School recognises that mobile phones and other digital devices bring many safety benefits and learning opportunities. While we fully embrace these technologies as important learning tools, we must also be alert to, aware of, and prepared to deal with challenges that misuse(s) of mobile phones can bring such as:

- *Disrupting lessons and distracting pupils from learning*
- *Capturing images of others without their permission which contravenes their Human Rights. Such images can be posted on the internet.*
- *Being used to bully, intimidate or humiliate people.*
- *Cheating during tests or examinations*

Use of Mobile Phones/digital devices in school

Mobile Phones are permitted in school, but should be switched off and put away when in any part of the building. ***There may be occasions when staff will give permission for mobiles/MP3s to be used in class to assist with the completion of course work.***

As agreed at a BOS Meeting, staff might also give permission for pupils to listen to music when undertaking quiet revision. This is at the discretion of each individual teacher and pupils should not constantly make this request if teachers clearly not give their permission.

When going on trips and excursions, the use of camera and filming functions should be in line with current CEC guidelines (refer to Policy ***P4 : Photography & Videoing***). It is considered a misuse of a mobile phone to record staff or other pupils without their permission.

It is advisable that staff do not agree to pupils photographing them with camera phones. If staff are concerned that this has been breached, they should contact the Head Teacher immediately.

Procedures

If a pupil is found using a mobile phone during the school day in the school building, the member of staff should confiscate it and send it to the main office. The pupil should be told to collect the mobile phone from the office at the end of the school day.

If a pupil refuses to hand over the phone, contact the relevant Year Head.

On receipt of the phone, the office staff should complete the 'Mobile Phone' log.

At the end of the day, the pupil should report to the relevant Year Head to discuss the misuse of the phone, which will *normally* be returned at this time.

In instances when the phone has been used to carry sexually explicit images or to capture images of aggression or violence, the phone may be kept to provide the police with evidence.

If a pupil repeatedly misuses their mobile phone, arrangements will be made for their parent/carer to collect the phone from the school.

Action when illegal acts are committed

The school has a very clear policy which will be taken if illegal acts such as filming criminal activity, downloading or forwarding indecent images is suspected or established.

- 1) A senior member of staff will be involved from the outset
- 2) Whenever possible, the phone/digital device will be confiscated, retained in a secure place and logged, taking care not to delete any images or recordings which could be used as evidence.
- 3) Accurate records of any relevant complaints or incidents should be kept and signed, where appropriate.
- 4) If a child protection issue is suspected, the relevant procedures will be followed.
- 5) If criminal activity is suspected, advice should be sought from the police as to who should contact the parents.
- 6) The appropriate line manager linked to the school should be informed
- 7) We will work with the police and other appropriate agencies until the matter is resolved.

Development and consultation of this policy

From September 2011, following consultation with the pupil body, office staff and interested teaching staff, there will be a revised policy constructed. This will involve providing specific information on when and where mobile phones and other digital devices should be switched off, out of sight, including outside classrooms such as corridors, dining areas, toilets, changing rooms, campus etc. This information will be relayed at Assemblies and via plasma notices and posters.



Date of Policy: *March 2008*

Date of Policy Review: *September 2011*