

Coláiste Thiarnáin Naofa

Mobile Phones & Electronic Device Policy

St. Tiernan's College recognises that mobile phones and smart devices are an integral part of young people's culture and way of life and can have considerable value when used appropriately. However, we also recognise that phones and smart devices are a distraction, interrupt communication and socialisation and add to anxiety and stress levels among students. The aim of this policy is to protect the wellbeing of all within St Tiernan's College. St.Tiernan's College students are entitled to learn in an environment free from outside distraction. Every student has the right to disconnect, the right to privacy and the right to learn in an environment that is free from technological distractions. In an effort to ensure this LockerFix lockable phone pouches are used in our school.

This means:

• Phones are not to be used during the school day nor on school-related sporting activities or trips.

Exceptions to the above:

• On medical grounds where the device is essential to manage a medical condition and only with prior permission of the Principal/Deputy Principal with medical documentation to support the need for the phone to monitor the named condition.

Any student who needs their device for the above purpose will be supplied with a pouch with a velcro closing to allow access when essential.

Teachers and staff will be supplied with the name/ names of those students.

• In the event that a student does not have parental permission to bring their phone to school the parent/guardian must inform the Principal /Deputy Principal in writing of this fact.

For students who are over 18 years of age who do not wish to bring their mobile phone to school must provide this information in writing to the Principal/Deputy Principal.

However , if they wish to bring their mobile phone on school trips, matches etc. they must do so in a school issued pouch.

Each student is assigned a personal pouch. It is the responsibility of each student to

bring their Pouch with them to school every day and keep it in good working condition. LockerFix

Pouches are given on loan to students free of charge and must be returned when the student ceases their education in St. Tiernan's College.

Students will be expected to 'pouch' their phone at the start of the school day before entering the school grounds and 'un pouch' at the end of the school day/on leaving the school building.

For the purpose of this policy, 'pouch' means to switch one's phone off, place the phone inside the pouch and then lock the pouch closed by pressing the push button on the pouch. 'Un pouch' means to unlock one's pouch using one of the designated un pouching stations at the main school exits, remove the phone from the pouch and then lock the empty pouch to prevent damage while in transit. The school also has a number of hand held unlocking devices for trips and tours or to aid the unlocking at the end of the school day.

Before a student arrives on school grounds, students are required to:

1. Turn off their phone.

2. Place their phone inside their Pouch and fasten it closed.

3. Students will maintain possession of their phone during the school day and are

expected to place their personal Pouch in their lockers.

Those who get the early buses can store their pouch in their bag after lunchtime.

<u>The school accepts no responsibility for devices left unattended in bags or unlocked lockers.</u>

Students attending supervised study after school must keep their phones for the duration of study. Student laptops will be available to use for research/accessing Teams purposes.

This policy also applies to students attending/travelling to/from school sporting

events such as matches. Phones may be un pouched for health & safety purposes or for

payment purposes en route or at their destination.

In exceptional circumstances students may be allowed to use their phones while on a school trip , e.g trips and tours where students have time for sightseeing, shopping etc. and may need their phone to contact teachers / staff members who are supervising the trip /tour or other students in their group.

If a student is using their mobile phone while on a school tour/activity, they must do so in an

appropriate and responsible manner. Students should be mindful of other students/staff/members of the public when taking photos/videos and respect the privacy rights of others at all times.

Parents/ Guardians are requested to actively support the school in implementing our Mobile Phone & Electronic Device Policy.

Violations of School policy on Mobile phones/Smart devices:

Students who fail to pouch their phone or who remove their phone from their pouch without permission during the day will have their phone confiscated. Their parent/guardian will be contacted by text /phone call to inform them that the student's phone has been confiscated and that the student is suspended for the following day in line with our Code of Behaviour.

Refusal to allow confiscation of the device will be treated as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour. The student will be sent immediately to the Principal/Deputy Principal's office at such time the students parent/guardian will be contacted to collect the phone and the student will also be suspended for the following school day.

• If a student has a second breach of the school policy on mobile phones, it will be viewed as a serious breach of the school policy. The above sanction will be implemented , before returning to school, the student , together with a parent/guardian will be required to meet with members of the Disciplinary Committee to discuss the breaches and must give an undertaking in writing that this will not reoccur , this is in line with our Code of Behaviour.

If a parent/guardian is not available to collect the student when contacted, the student will be placed on inhouse suspension for the remainder of the day. Their phone will be stored in the school safe until such a time as the parent/guardian can collect it.

Random spot checks will be carried out to ensure compliance with this policy.

If a student is found to have a second phone at school or has pouched another

item, this will be viewed as a serious breach of the school policy. Parents will be contacted

and asked to remove their son/daughter from the school for the remainder of the school day or

the student will be placed on in-school suspension until such a time as they can be collected and will be suspended for the following day.

Other:

• Leaving School (before the end of the day): If necessary to leave school before

the end of the school day students should 'unpouch' their phone/smartwatch at the

office in reception on their departure.

• Damaged or Lost Pouch: Any loss or damage to a pouch, which renders it

unusable, will result in the student purchasing a new one at a cost of €20.

Students must notify the school immediately explaining what happened. If any

damage is spotted at a pouch check it will be considered intentional unless the

student has raised it previously.

• Forgotten Pouch: In the event that a student forgets their pouch, they need to report to Reception in advance of 8.55am , they will be provided with a spare pouch for the duration of that day only. Alternatively, the phone will be stored in the school safe until the end of the school day.

In the event that a student consistently forgets their pouch, it is considered lost.

Refer to the Lost Pouch policy above.

Please note: Parents/ Guardians are asked to support the school in maintaining boundaries with regard to mobile phone usage while their children are in the care of our school community. Therefore, we respectfully request that in the event of an emergency parents make contact with their child during the school day through the school office 096-31236.

Parents/Guardians are requested to actively support the school in implementing our Mobile Phone & Electronic Device Policy.

This is necessary because every student has the right to disconnect, the right to privacy and

the right to learn in a happy, safe and healthy environment that is free from technological

distractions.

Mobile phones and electronic devices refers to all devices which can access the internet , social media make and receive calls and messages

Currently there is no need to pouch smartwatches and equivalent devices, however, in the event of such devices being used to access social media, messages etc. the policy will be reviewed to include these also.

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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Mhaigh Eo, Shligigh agus Liatroma
Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim
Education and Training Board