**St. Brendan’s College, Belmullet, Co. Mayo**

**Policy on the Usage of Mobile Phones/Personal Media Devices**

Rationale

Saint Brendan’s College recognises that mobile phones/personal media devices have become an integral part of the way we communicate today. We recognise the positive aspects regarding parents’ concerns for students’ safety and their potential as a powerful tool for teaching and learning going forward.

However, the misuse of mobile phones/personal media devices has a disruptive effect on classroom teaching and learning. The use of mobile phones/personal media devices in a disruptive manner in a class includes ringing/silent ringing, transmitting or receiving text messages, alarm signals, listening to music or recording, etc.

There are also inherent dangers associated with the misuse/abuse of camera/picture phones. Staff and students must be protected from any invasion of privacy or harassment associated with the misuse/abuse of mobile phones.

The school’s policy attempts to balance the positives against the negatives and aims to encourage the responsible use of mobile phones/personal media devices by students. During our review of the policy, we consulted with student groups, formally and informally, including The Student Council and First Year Forum.

Policy

Pupils will be permitted to bring mobile phones/personal media devices to school under the following conditions.

* Students may use phones / personal media players at the following times:
* Prior to start of school up to 9.00 a.m.
* At Break and Lunch times.
* Phones/personal media devices must be switched off at all other times.
* Using a mobile phone as a camera is strictly prohibited during school hours. It is a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour.
* Phones/personal media devices/cameras are not allowed to be used at any time in changing rooms or toilets
* Phones/personal media devices are the responsibility of the individual and the College will accept no responsibility for lost or stolen items.
* The use of phones/personal media devices is permitted within the classroom only under the direction and supervision of a teacher for the purposes of education and/or research where it is deemed to be of direct benefit to teaching and learning.

Sanctions

Where it is found that a student has misused/abused the conditions under which the usage of mobile phones/personal media devices are allowed; it is deemed a breach of the school’s Code of Discipline and sanctions will apply.

If a class teacher finds that a mobile phone/personal media device has been switched on during class time, he/she has the right to confiscate the phone/personal media device. This is also the procedure to be followed when classes are being supervised by a substitute/trainee teacher. In this instance, the mobile phone/personal media device will be retained by the school and will only be returned to parent and/or guardian. Repeat offences will be deemed a breach of the school’s Code of Discipline and further sanctions will apply.

The misuse of a camera phone/camera including taking or sending inappropriate images, using the phone to harass others and/or to invade their privacy or dignity is considered a serious discipline offence. College management will respond appropriately in such cases and will have the full range of sanctions open to them.

Policy review completed October 2019 and brought to the Board of Management 8/11/2019