

## **Policy on the Use of Mobile Telephones and Electronic Devices**

### **Introductory Statement**

This policy was drawn up in response to a significant increase in the use of mobile telephones and hand held electronic devices among the school community over recent years.

### **Rationale**

It is recognised that mobile telephones and electronic devices such as iPods and MP3 Players can be intrusive and distracting in all situations and this is particularly so in a learning environment. In addition to the inconvenience, the debate still goes on about the possible harmful effects of the frequent use of mobile phones.

Children could be particularly vulnerable in this regard.

In recent years, mobile phones have been used to conduct bullying campaigns.

Mindful of the duties and responsibilities assigned to staff in working with children, it is vital that staff be engaged with children at all working times.

In the context of all of these factors, the Board of Management saw a need to clarify its position in relation to the use of mobile telephones and electronic devices in the school.

### **Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

The use of mobile phones and other electronic devices is not conducive to learning and may interfere with the provision of a safe school environment, a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS.

### **Aims**

By introducing this Policy on the Use of Mobile Telephones and Electronic Devices, we hope to achieve the following aims:

- To clarify the Board's position in relation to mobile phones and other electronic devices
- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to teaching and learning
- To provide a safe learning environment for pupils and a safe working environment for teachers

### **Content**

#### ***Pupils***

Pupils are encouraged not to bring mobile phones to school.

If a pupil has to bring a mobile phone to school, it must be switched off outside the school gate. The pupil must give the phone to her class teacher before class begins. It will be returned when school hours are over.

If a pupil is found to have a mobile phone that has not been given to her teacher, the mobile phone will be confiscated and will be returned only to an adult.

### ***Pupils cont'd.***

Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so, with their class teacher's permission, through the school secretary using the school landline phone. Calls to a landline will be charged at 20c per call. Calls to mobile phones will be charged at 50c per call. There will be no charge if a child is unwell.

Pupils must not bring any other electronic devices to school at any time, unless requested to do so by a teacher, for a specific purpose.

The Board of Management and staff do not accept responsibility for any loss of or damage to mobile phones or electronic devices brought to the school.

### ***Staff***

Staff mobile phones should be on silent during class time and while on supervision duty.

With the exception of emergency situations, staff personal calls and texts should be confined to break times. In the case of an emergency, a staff member should organise supervision for his/her class and leave the classroom before making personal calls or sending text messages.

When going on outings outside of the school premises, staff members may leave their phones on. They will be reimbursed for any calls made in relation to school business while on a school outing.

Staff members may use the school landline to make or receive work related calls. As far as possible such calls should be confined to break times or before/after school hours.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of every member of the school community to co-operate with this Policy.

### **Review and Ratification**

This Policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management, in consultation with the Parents' Association and Staff.