

St Bede's Catholic Comprehensive School and Byron Sixth Form College
Mobile Phones: Acceptable Use Policy (Students)
2022-2023

1. Purpose

1.1. The widespread ownership of mobile phones and mobile devices among young people requires that teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones and devices are used responsibly by students. This Acceptable Use 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.

1.2. St Bede's Catholic Comprehensive School and Byron College has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones/devices that provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.

1.3. Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to school.

1.4. The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, and extra-curricular activities both on the school grounds and off-site.

2. Rationale

2.1. The school recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life, but that such technologies need to be used responsibly.

2.2. Personal safety and security

Our School accepts that parents/carers give their children mobiles/devices to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There are also understandable concerns about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

3. Responsibility

3.1. It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones/devices to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

3.2. The decision to provide a mobile phone for students 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.

3.3. Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone/device 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.

3.4. Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office always remains the first point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through the school reception to Heads of House also reduces the likelihood of inadvertently disrupting lessons.

4. Acceptable Uses for pupils in Years 7-11

4.1. Mobile phones/devices should be switched off and kept out of sight as soon as students arrive on site, whilst moving between lessons, and at break and lunchtimes. They may be switched back on when students have exited the main building.

Parents/carers are requested that in cases of emergency they are to contact the school first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements. Unless express permission is granted from the Head of House for an exceptional reason, mobile phones should not be used by students to make calls, send SMS messages, browse the internet, access social media, take photos/ videos or use any other applications during the school day.

5. Unacceptable Uses

5.1. Mobile phones/devices must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping. They should be turned off and placed in bags as soon as students enter the school site for the duration of the day.

5.2. Using mobile phones/devices to bully or embarrass students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated and may lead to a permanent exclusion. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.

5.3. Mobile phones/devices are not to be used or taken into changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.

5.4. Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading, racist, homophobic, extremist and or pornographic images, the transmission of such images can be deemed a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence. This may result in an alleged incident – of a serious nature – being referred to the Police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified as soon as is possible.

5.5. It is unacceptable to take a picture or video of a member of staff without their express permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images.

6. Sanctions

6.1. Students who infringe the rules set out in this document will have their phone confiscated by staff. The student must give it to a teacher if requested. Failure to do so will lead to a BASE inclusion.

6.2. On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher, bagged and taken to a secure place within the school office. A parent/carers will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day and a record will be made of the incident and behaviour points given.

6.3. Repeated infringements of the mobile phone code of conduct by a student may result in a fixed term or permanent ban on bringing their mobile phone to school.