

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES POLICY OVERVIEW

St Patrick's College acknowledges that the use of personal communication devices is widely accepted in today's society for recreational, personal, educational and communication purposes. The College is aware that the use of such devices for educational purposes (particularly smart phones application will evolve in future years.

We are committed to teach our students to use such technology safely, responsibly and ethically. Personal communication devices include a wide range of devices owned by individual students and brought to school by personal choice. They include (but are not limited to) mobile phones, MP3 players, iPod shuffles and USB memory sticks. Recently, the emergence of portable electronic 'smart' devices which integrate many functions have also appeared. Such devices provide functions including telephone, messaging (sms), camera, portable digital assistance (PDA), internet access (and hence access to social networking sites), email access, Portable Music player (MP3), portable video player (MP4), and other functions.

Medical authorities are concerned by the potential of musical devices to cause long term hearing impairment. Educationalists are concerned by the possibility that overuse of musical devices can lead to social isolation and impairment of communication skills, important aspects of classroom learning and interactions outside of the classroom.

It is the purpose of this policy to establish regulations to guide the appropriate and safe student use of these devices within St Patrick's College. It is very important for students to learn when and where it is appropriate for personal communication devices to be used, as well as to understand the safe use of such devices and the dangers of their misuse.

One of our College's goals is to prepare its members for life in an electronic, global community. Therefore as well as integrating technology within the curriculum we encourage ethical, balanced and responsible use of technology. Our College values relationships and the building of community and hence we have the following guidelines outlining the use on campus of personal communication devices.

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES – GUIDELINES FOR USE

1. Students are strongly encouraged to store personal communication devices in their locker during the day.
2. If students do have their phone with them in class it should not be taken out of their pocket unless instructed by a staff member.
3. It is never acceptable for students to receive or send sms messages or to make or take telephone calls whilst in class. Telephone and sms message functions 'alert settings' on any device must be disabled/switched off during all class time so as not to interrupt classes.
4. If the need arises to check / send messages (or make / receive a phone call) before school or during recess and lunchtime this should only occur at a student's locker, or at another venue with staff permission. .
5. Phones should never be used as a camera at school unless students have staff permission.
6. Listening to music in class via a personal communication device or computer may only be permitted to occur when it is educationally relevant (e.g. music and dance subjects). Senior students may use Personal Communication Devices to listen to music in study periods.
7. Students may not listen to music on personal communication devices before school or during recess and lunchtime. Hence earphones should not be visible on a student's uniform. Due to safety concerns (e.g. blocking out traffic noise) students are not encouraged to listen to music on these devices when travelling to and from school.

8. USB memory sticks are the preferred means of transferring curriculum work between home and school.
9. Personal communication devices, including mobile phones, are not to be brought into any examinations or assessment tasks. They may contain stored material in breach of examination conditions. or assessment tasks. They may contain stored material in breach of examination conditions. Students who take mobile phones into examinations or assessment sessions risk losing all marks for the exam. (TQA regulation).
10. The College will not accept responsibility for the loss or damage of a personal communication device. The College will not advertise lost personal communication devices on any bulletin or newsletter.

CONTRAVENING THIS POLICY

Students in breach of the above conditions may have their electronic device confiscated by the staff member and placed in secure storage with the Personal Assistant to the Head of School. The student may collect the confiscated personal communication device from the Head of School or Pastoral / Curriculum Coordinators at the end of the day. Repeat offences may require a parent or guardian to come to the school to discuss the matter and collect the confiscated item.

Approved by:	Principal/Board
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