

# Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

## Use of Mobile Phones in School Policy

*At Sacred Heart we are a loving Christian family who live and learn happily together and grow in the Catholic faith.*

### Rationale

Mobile phones are now a feature of modern society and some of our pupils own one. However, increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology presents a number of issues for our school:

- Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft;
- Mobile phones (and their cost and level of sophistication- or otherwise) can make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential cyberbullying;
- Even when apparently silent, the use of mobile phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of the classroom discipline;
- Use of the newer phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.
- The school believes that we have a duty to help all students to understand the social and moral issues associated with the use of new technologies. Problems with mobile phones fall into three categories – text, speech and images.
- Extreme examples include 'cyberbullying'.
- Camera and video phones combined with wireless technology enable students to make still images or videos of themselves or others and 'send' them to other phones or post them on the internet. Sometimes these can be candid images that have been taken without the consent or even knowledge of the person involved. Occasionally, it can be with malicious intent.
- Students with 'wireless' or blue tooth phones can have unrestricted access to the internet and are able to download material from other similar devices. Many internet sites aim their content (text, music, images and videos) at young people who can download or upload files and then share them by sending them to other mobile phones. On some sites acceptable material, such as songs, cartoons or 'funny' videos, is presented alongside unacceptable material putting vulnerable young people at risk.

It is not realistic to prohibit phones being brought into school, especially given that many are now so slim that they are easily hidden. We also accept that many parents have concerns about children who make their own way to and from school. It is our policy to allow pupils to have mobile phones with them in school under the conditions outlined in the policy below.

### Policy

- The school discourages, and advises all parents to discourage, pupils from bringing mobile phones to school on the grounds that they are valuable and may be lost or stolen.
- When a pupil does bring a mobile phone into school they should leave it in the school office for safe keeping until the end of the day.

- Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone into school, the phone must remain switched off during the school day and may not be used for any purpose, on school premises, grounds or during off-site activities unless given permission by an adult.
- Where a school pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone, the phone will be confiscated from the child and returned to the parent, guardian or carer.
- This policy will be incorporated into the school's policy on behaviour.
- Incidents of cyberbullying involving pupils in the school will be investigated by the school.

### **Emergencies**

- If a pupil needs to contact their parents/guardians they will be allowed to use the school phone. If parents need to contact children urgently that should phone the school office and a message will be relayed promptly.

### **Responsibility for mobile phones**

- The school accepts no responsibility **whatsoever** for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones if pupils do not hand them in the morning. It is the responsibility of parents and pupils to ensure mobile phones are properly insured and clearly labelled.