

Mobile Phone Policy

Scope of this Policy:

This policy covers all Personal Electronic devices (P.E.D.s) which includes:

- Mobile phones/smart phones/smart watches etc.
- All electronic devices including MP3/4, personal music devices, tablets or any other device capable of recording or sending messages. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Loreto College aims to provide effective teaching and learning in a safe and caring atmosphere. Phones can disrupt effective teaching and learning, even when in silent mode, and irresponsible use can lead to child protection and data protection being compromised.

This Policy applies to the entire school campus which includes the school buildings, environs and all school related activities that occur on-site and off-site in the name of the school.

- Loreto College expects that phones will be switched off once on school grounds. and kept in bags during the course of the school day, including break-time and lunchtime, so as to avoid disrupting teaching and learning and a breach of data and child protection.
- If brought to school mobile phones must be switched off and stored throughout the day in students school bag /secured in student locker.
- ‘Switched off’ does not mean ‘Silent’, ‘Meeting’ or any similar mode.
- The phone must be powered off. Mobile phones/headphones etc must not be visible at all during the course of the school day.

This means that phones must not be used for:

making calls,
checking the time,
texting or used as a calculator.

- Students are not permitted to carry their mobile devices in uniform pockets (trouser/skirt or shirt).
- The school does not permit the streaming of music through mobile devices at any time in the school day.
- Mobile phones and P.E.Ds are expensive, and the school cannot accept responsibility for mobile phones/P.E.Ds. Devices/P.E.Ds are brought to school entirely at the owner’s risk. The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged devices.
- They must remain switched off during school-based activities. These include games, religious services, concerts and all other school-based and out of school activities. The use

of P.E.Ds including Smart watches during state exams/ house assessments to access material is strictly forbidden and will incur sanctions.

- As per legislation (GDPR), audio or visual recordings are not allowed and strictly forbidden. Serious sanctions, up to and including reporting to An Garda Síochána, will apply in the event of unauthorised photographs or recordings. Any comments, likes or sharing of such material will implicate you in the situation and may have very serious consequences for you up to and including suspension, expulsion and possible referral to the guards.
- In exceptional circumstances (e.g. classroom based assessments, school trips, out of school matches, foreign trips, out of school hours trips, medical needs etc.), prior permission may be granted by the school Principal for the use of the mobile phones/P.E.Ds on request by staff member responsible for the activity.
- On trips this allows students to contact teachers or Parents/Guardians as necessary. Students participating in school related activities must abide by the relevant rules. Inappropriate use of phones/P.E.Ds during school related activities is strictly forbidden and sanctions will apply.

Impersonating the school or members of the school community is forbidden. Accounts that impersonate people/Loreto College in a deceptive manner, or content that contains bullying, harassment, statements targeting an individual or hateful speech and behaviour will not be tolerated at Loreto College Mullingar. Such breaches will result in serious consequences and may include reporting to the Gardai and up to and including suspension or expulsion.

ADVICE TO PUPILS ON THE SAFE USE OF MOBILES

- Using your mobile is convenient and practical but you need to observe some common-sense ground rules to protect yourself from potential abuse or danger.
- Don't give out your number or friends' numbers to people you don't know, especially in Instant Messenger or Chat rooms.
- Keep your security code or PIN number private.
- If you get texts, which upset you, don't reply but keep a record and tell an adult. In serious cases you can report it to the gardaí.

- If you receive a rude or embarrassing image or text about someone don't forward it to others. Distributing sexual images of other young people is harassment and is illegal. If you receive something like this, tell an adult immediately.
- Ask permission before taking a picture of your friends and think before sending it on. Once sent you have lost control of it, and it could become public before you know it.
- Recording devices (any device with a camera/recording feature) must never be used in school and/or on any school activities, unless under the direct instruction or guidance of a teacher. If an unauthorised recording takes place, the relevant device(s) will be confiscated. The student will be required to delete the unauthorised recording in the presence of the school authorities. Unauthorised recording is a very serious offence and will be dealt with under the Code of Conduct (up to and including suspension and exclusion from school).
- Any posting or circulation of unauthorised recordings is forbidden and will be subject to very serious sanctions (up to and including suspension and exclusion from school).
- Incidents where mobile phones are used to bully other students or to send offensive messages/calls will be investigated under the Loreto College Anti-Bullying Policy. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school staff will act uniformly in accordance with this policy. Online activity outside of school may be referred to the Gardaí.

Sanctions

- Phones should be switched off on arrival at school campus and always stored securely in school bag or locked locker. Mobile phones must not be switched back on until the student leaves the school grounds after school each day. Mobile phones must not be switched on or be visible in the school campus. **If it is visible....it is considered to be in use!**
- If a recording is found to be made during the school day / on the school campus, this will also be seen as a breach of the school rules.
- Breaking of school rules regarding mobile phone will result in confiscation of the mobile phone (see table of consequences/sanctions below).
- The student must hand the phone over immediately to the relevant staff member and

is not permitted to remove the SIM card from the phone prior to confiscation. Refusal to hand a mobile device over to a staff member, on instruction, will be dealt with through the Loreto College Code of Behaviour

- Any phone confiscated (unless for a recording offence) will be returned after a definite period of time as per sanctions

Incidence Consequence

1st Incident The relevant staff member will give the student a verbal warning regarding this behaviour. The incident will be logged by the relevant staff member on VSware (to flag frequency of incidents for all staff). The phone will be kept in the school office until the end of the school day. The year head/principal /deputy principal will also record a note in the school journal for parent/ guardian to sign. The student will hand over the phone immediately and the relevant staff member will keep the phone until the end of that school day.

2nd Incident The incident will be logged by the relevant staff member on VSware (to flag frequency of incidents for all staff). The phone will be brought to the school office by the teacher. The year head/principal /deputy principal will also record a note in the school journal for parent/ guardian to sign. The phone will be confiscated until the end of the following school day. This may include a weekend. An alert message will be sent to parents /guardian. The student mobile phone will be stored securely in the school overnight.

3rd Incident The relevant staff member will log the incident on VSware (to flag frequency of incidents for all staff). The phone will be brought to the school office by the teacher. The year head/principal /deputy principal will also record a note in the school journal for parent/ guardian to sign. The phone will be confiscated and will be returned to the student at the end of three consecutive days. This may include a weekend. An alert message will be sent to parents /guardian. The student mobile phone will be stored securely in the school overnight.

4th Incident. The relevant staff member will log the incident on VSware (to flag frequency of incidents for all staff). The phone will be brought to the school office by the teacher. The year head/principal /deputy principal will also record a note in the school journal for parent/ guardian to sign. The student mobile phone will be stored securely in the school. An alert message will be sent to parents /guardian. Year Head who will arrange a meeting with the parents/guardians, the Year Head and the Principal/Deputy Principal. The phone will be

returned to the parent/guardian (usually at the meeting). The student mobile phone will be stored securely in the school overnight

Signed _____

Signed _____

Parent/ Guardian

Student