



**Use of Portable Technology
Policy
2018**

CHILD PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDING
POLICY:
USE OF PORTABLE TECHNOLOGY



The continued developments in the technology & use of mobile phones, tablets and other devices of this nature clearly have considerable potential for both good & ill, simultaneously providing their owners with increased security but also with the possibility of increased vulnerability to bullying via the use of text message/email etc. According to many sources, such bullying is on the increase.

Cyber bullying involves a number of behaviours, including some or all of

- Sending anonymous messages, making threats of violence
- Name calling
- Giving out personal information/images children or young people are embarrassed about
- Sending frightening or obscene images with a threat

As the number of people who own mobile phones continues to rise, there is every possibility this problem will increase further. The fact that young people rarely go anywhere without their phones means that perpetrators can bully at any time of day and victims may feel they have no escape or place of safety. As with any type of bullying, victims are not always willing to ask for help.

It is the policy of Desertmartin P.S. that pupils do not bring mobile phones to school. If a child does so, they will be asked to give the phone to a member of staff for safekeeping and it will be returned to the child's parent/carer at the end of the school day. In the event of an emergency arising where the

child urgently needs to contact their parents, they will be permitted to use the school landline.

It is clearly unreasonable to refuse pupils the use of mobile phones in school if staff are continuing to use them. However, given the size of our school and the nature of our partnership with Knocknagin PS, staff are advised to keep either their personal phone or the school mobile with them especially in circumstances such as PE or school trips or when they will be away from school grounds with a group of children. In this context, the following approach is recommended:

- If staff need to make/respond to phone calls, these calls are kept brief &, where possible, made out of earshot of pupils. Language used should also be as discreet as possible!
- If staff need to communicate using text message (or similar) they will put the phone in a location where there is no possibility of using the camera - e.g. flat on a desk or their knee.
- Staff will not in any circumstances use cameras on their personal mobile phones - the school phone only should be used for this.
- Senior management reserve the right to ask staff members to justify the need to use phones in class time.

The issue of cyber bullying will be included in our curricular work on all forms of bullying, both in PDMU & where it also arises in other curricular areas.

For the protection of both pupils and staff, it is also **strongly** recommended that no members of school staff, placement students or volunteers are communicating with pupils through any form of social media (e.g. texting, Facebook, Snapchat Twitter etc). Likewise, staff are advised **not** to be facebook "friends" with parents/carers of pupils at the school.

Should a pupil allege they are the victim of mobile phone bullying, staff will treat the incident as they would any other form of bullying (see anti-bullying policy). Pupils may need help to report this to the appropriate firm. Appendix 1 contains a list of contact numbers for mobile phone providers.