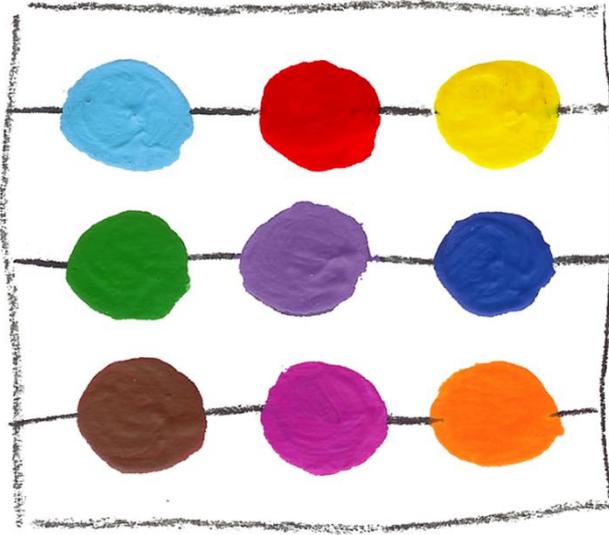


# Smart Devices Policy



*Carrigaline Educate Together N.S.*

This document is intended to provide details of the main policies of Carrigaline Educate Together National School (CETNS). It is intended to help parents and guardians understand the environment and approach of the school. This document is regularly reviewed. All feedback is encouraged and welcome.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Authors</b>
February 2018	First version of policy	Board of Management
March 2020	Policy reviewed	Board of Management
December 2021	Policy reviewed	Board of Management

### **School Contact Details**

**Principal:** Mel Thornton

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# Smart Devices Policy

## Introduction

This policy is the result of the collaboration of the Policy Committee, together with the Board of Management

## Rationale

The Board of Management identified the need for a policy to ensure the safety and well-being of staff and children. The school recognises its wider social responsibility to educate and inform students about the dangers posed by misusing these devices.

## Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

The Smart Devices Policy reflects the overall ethos of the school which states: Carrigaline Educate Together N.S. is one of a number of equality-based schools throughout the country. The representative organisation for these schools is 'Educate Together'.

Educate Together aims to meet a growing need in Irish society for schools that recognise the developing diversity of Irish life and the modern need for democratic management structures. In particular, Educate Together guarantees children and parents of all faiths and none equal respect in the operation and governing of education.

The schools operated by the member associations of Educate Together are fully recognised by the Irish Department of Education and Science and work under the same regulations and funding structures as other national schools. However, they have a distinct ethos or governing spirit. This has been defined in the following terms:

- **Equality based** i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected
- **Co-educational** and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities
- **Child centred** in their approach to education
- **Democratically run** with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers (*Source: Educate Together Charter*)

Whilst the concepts of child-centeredness and co-educationalism are now widely accepted in Irish primary education, what distinguishes the Educate Together schools is their hard work in developing a culturally inclusive and democratic ethos. This has pioneered unique approaches to inclusion of minority opinions and faiths in the Irish context.

The schools have developed education programmes which open the eyes of children to the naturally positive contribution that social, religious and cultural diversity and difference of viewpoint and opinion make to society.

The other characteristic feature of these schools is that they are democratically organised and governed. This maximises the potential for building a genuine partnership between the professional, objective role of the teacher and the necessarily personal involvement of the parent in contributing to their children's education.

*Information taken from the Educate Together website [www.educatetogether.ie](http://www.educatetogether.ie)*

Carrigaline Educate Together N.S. makes the distinction between denominational education and moral/religious education. The ethical curriculum followed by the school is called the Learn Together Curriculum. It is comprised of four strands:

Morality & Spirituality, Equality & Justice, Belief systems, Ethics & the environment.

Denominational instruction is facilitated by the school insofar as groups are permitted to use the school premises. This is organised by parents outside of school hours.

The Smart Devices Policy recognises and endeavours to adopt the values that are set out in the ethos of the school for those at work in the school. It attempts to support and sustain a harmonious environment in which the potential of all staff is nurtured through the cooperation between staff, pupils, parents, board members and all other relevant parties.

## **Definition**

For the purposes of this policy, the terms “phone” and “smart device” include:

- A device that can connect to a mobile network, Wifi or internet service
- A device that can make voice/video calls or send and receive text/video/voice messages, sound/video recordings and any other digital or other communications of any kind
- A device that can take photographs/videos or connect to social media apps and services

For the avoidance of doubt, this includes but is not limited to all types of phones, tablets, smart watches, music players and any other such devices.

## **Aims**

The Smart Devices Policy aims to:

- develop and maintain a policy statement specific to the needs of the school in relation to the use of smart devices on the school site and while on school related outings whilst ensuring the benefits that they provide such as increased safety on the way to and from school can continue
- the Smart Devices Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving smart devices can be clearly identified and addressed
- provide school personnel with guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of smart devices on the school site

## **School’s Strategy**

The school employs a number of strategies in order to monitor the use of smart devices. These strategies are as follows:

## **Responsibility**

- It is the responsibility of students who bring smart devices to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- The decision to provide a smart device to their child should be made by parents or guardians.
- Parents/guardians should be aware that if their child takes a smart device to school the school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred whilst the devices are on site.

- Parents/guardians are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in the relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception is the only acceptable and correct way to contact students; this also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.
- Students should only make contact with parents/guardians via the school office, not their smart devices: for example, if feeling unwell.

### **Children and the acceptable use of smart devices:**

- Smart devices must be switched off and kept out of sight and in the school bag at all times, from point of entry to the school site until exiting the site; this includes breaks between lessons and lunch times. Teachers may decide to collect smart devices and return them to pupils at the end of the day.
- Exemptions may be permitted only in exceptional circumstances if the parent/guardian specifically requests it (normally on medical grounds). Such requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis and should be directed in writing, via letter or email, to the principal. Exemptions may also be permitted in the case of educational purposes e.g. projects on an iPad where they will only be used under the supervision of the teacher.
- Unless express permission is granted, smart devices must not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, access the internet, take photos, take videos, gain access to social media or use any other application during the school day or other educational activities.
- Where a student is on any school outing (e.g. school tour, swimming, sport tournament, trip to the library, etc.) the student must also keep their smart device switched off and out of sight at all times. Teachers may decide to collect smart devices and return them to pupils at the end of the day.
- The Bluetooth function of a smart device must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other devices.
- Smart devices must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping as they should be turned off at all times and placed in a student's bag, out of sight whilst on the school site.
- Smart devices are not to be used in changing rooms or toilets.
- It is unacceptable to take a picture or record a member of staff, other children or any member of the school community without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images and the student will face sanctioning by the principal.
- Students will be educated regarding the safe and appropriate use of personal devices and mobile phones outside of school.
- Where any disruption to lessons is caused by a smart device, if a smart device is seen by a member of staff, or if any of the above stated acceptable use of smart devices not be complied with, the student responsible will face a sanction. This will include, but is not limited to, confiscation of the device until the end of the school day. Should the student concerned be in breach of this for a second time the smart device will be confiscated and parents/guardians will be asked to collect the device from school. A detention will be given in both instances. Any further infringements of the Smart Devices Policy may result in other appropriate sanctions being imposed, in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

### **Theft or damage where a smart device is brought into school**

- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged smart devices.
- The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their smart devices stolen whilst travelling to and from school.
- It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin codes to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their smart devices (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin codes confidential. Smart devices and/or passwords must not be shared.
- Incidents where students use mobile phones/smart devices to bully or send offensive messages or calls to other students or staff members will be dealt with in accordance with the school's [Anti-Bullying Policy](#). It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/smart device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí in such incidents.

### **Staff and the acceptable use of smart devices:**

- Mobile phones and all wearable smart devices may only be used in a personal capacity by teachers and special needs assistants (SNA) during staff breaks or after the students have left the site unless in the case of a family emergency. Staff members are permitted to use phones or smart devices during school hours for school-related business only as part of their work activities. The Data Protection Policy outlines best practice of how to use and store data effectively in the school
- All members of the Carrigaline Educate Together school community are advised to take steps to protect their mobile phones or devices from loss, theft or damage.
- All members of the Carrigaline Educate Together school community are advised to use passwords/pin codes to ensure that unauthorised calls or actions cannot be made on their phones or devices if they are lost or stolen. Passwords and pin codes should be kept confidential. Mobile phones and personal devices should not be shared.
- School mobile phones and devices must always be used in accordance with the Smart Devices Policy and any other relevant policies.
- School mobile phones and devices used for communication with parents and students must be suitably protected via a passcode/password/pin and must only be accessed and used by members of staff. These can be used by students under the supervision of a member of staff.
- Staff will inform any visitors to the school of our Smart Devices Policy and they will be expected to follow this policy

### **Success Criteria**

Our Smart Devices Policy will be seen to be working well when:

- Positive feedback from members of the school community is received
- The school community are clear about and are committed to the principles that are outlined in this policy and correct procedures are being implemented

### **Roles and Responsibility**

The Board of Management, Principal, teachers, SNAs, parents/guardians and school personnel have both a role and a responsibility in successfully implementing this policy.

The policy will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis by the policy

committee.

### **Implementation Date**

This policy was implemented in March 2018

### **Timetable for Review**

This policy was reviewed during the school year 2021/22. It will next be reviewed in the school year 2024/2025 .

### **Ratification and Communication**

The updated policy will be communicated to members of the Board of Management prior to the meeting of the BOM on December 8<sup>th</sup> 2021.

Parents will be made aware via Aladdin that the policy is available to view on the school website. A copy of the policy will be made available for the staff to view on Google Drive. A hard copy of the policy will be available in the school office in the policy folder.

*Date of ratification: 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021*

*Signed:*

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CHAIRPERSON OF BOM

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_