# Mobile Phone Policy

Circular 0038/2018 states that ‘schools are advised that they should have a whole school policy in place covering the use of tablet devices and smartphones in the classroom and during the school day.’

This Mobile Phone Policy applies to any device that makes or receives phone calls, leaves messages, sends text messages, surfs the Internet, or downloads and allows for the reading of and responding to email whether the device is company-supplied or personally owned.

**Note**: The term ‘phone’ in this policy denotes mobile phones, iPods, MP3, MP4 players and any similar portable electronic devices.

Youthreach accepts that students are permitted to bring mobile phones and digital devices to the centre and recognises that mobile phones and digital devices are now an integral part of young peoples’ culture and way of life and can have considerable value. It is recognised that such technology will play an increasing part in future learning practices, but, like existing ICT use, this should follow agreed rules and guidelines to prevent disruption and instil good learning habits.

**Policies that may impact on this policy include**

• Acceptable Usage Policy

• Anti-Bullying Policy, to include reference to cyberbullying

• Data Protection Policy, to include reference to the use of images and social media.

• Bring Your Own Device (BYOD), which allows students to bring their own devices, especially tablets and other suitable personal devices, into classrooms to support improving student learning outcomes.

• Wellbeing, to ensure the area of safe and ethical use of the internet is addressed in the context of the whole-centre approach to wellbeing.

**Mobile phones do present a number of problems**

* They are valuable items that can be stolen
* Their use can render students subject to potential bullying and inappropriate contacts
* They can disrupt the learning environment
* Camera functions can lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images

**This policy will outline the responsible use of such devices when used in this centre**

1. Students are required to use phones and devices responsibly at all times
2. Students must ensure that files stored on their phone do not contain violent, degrading or offensive images. The transmission of some images/information can be a criminal offence and will be dealt with as such by the centre.
3. No unauthorised photographs can be taken or recordings, video and audio made with mobile phones. Using phones in such a way can seriously infringe on people’s rights and appropriate sanctions will be imposed as per the centre’s procedures.
4. Cyber-bullying is completely unacceptable, and will be followed up by the centre as serious misbehaviour which the centre, in turn, will invoke the necessary sanctions as laid out in the centre’s policies and procedures. Incidents where students use mobile phones to bully other students or send offensive messages, images or calls will be investigated under the 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 centre may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí in such incidents.
5. This Youthreach centre 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 centre expects that phones will be switched off during the day, and will only be switched on at break-time and lunchtime, so as to avoid disrupting teaching and learning and a breach of data and child protection.
6. Mobile phones/headphones etc. must not be visible at all during class time. Where appropriate, an individual member of staff may give permission for the use of a device for a specific educational purpose.
7. Head phones must not be worn during or between lessons, for reasons of safety and courtesy.
8. Students must not use phones or MP3 players to broadcast music, unless sanctioned by a member of staff.
9. The centre accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones. The safety and security of mobile phones is wholly a matter for students/parents/guardians.
10. It is strongly advised that students mark their mobile phones with their names and use passwords to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones.
11. Parents/guardians are asked not to arrange to contact students by mobile phone at any time during class time. During class time if parents/guardians need to contact a student, they may contact the centre through the office and students are directed to use the office phone in emergencies.

Office No: (01) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**CONSEQUENCES**In the event of a student failing to comply with the above policy the following sanctions will apply;

**First Offence**

On the first offence, the phone/audio device will be removed from the student and brought to the main office where it will be stored securely. The centre will hold the phone/audio device until the end of the following day. The offence will be recorded and where a student is under 18 years, Parents/Guardians will be notified of the offence by a letter.

**Second Offence**

A student found to be using a phone/audio device for a second time, will have the phone/audio device removed and brought to the main office where it will be stored securely. On this occasion, the phone/audio device will not be returned for two days. The offence will be recorded. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the offence by letter if student is under the age of 18 years.

**Third Offence**

Should a student be found to be using a phone/audio device on a third or subsequent occasion, the phone/audio device will be removed from the student and brought to the main office where it will be stored securely. On this occasion, the phone/audio device will not be returned for four days. In addition, the student will be required to pay a fee of €2 for the return of the phone. The offence will be recorded. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the offence by letter if a student is under the age of 18 years.

If a student persists to breach the rules as laid out in this policy, then the parents/guardians and student (under 18 years) will be requested to attend a meeting with the Coordinator to discuss the issue. Furthermore, if no resolution to the breach of policy can be found, the Parent/Guardian with the student (if under 18 years) may be requested to attend a meeting with senior management. If the student is over 18 years, they may be requested to meet with senior management.

NOTE:
Should a student be found to be using a phone/audio device during the course of the centre day and refuses to hand up the phone/audio device, they will be brought immediately to the main office where Parent/Guardian will be contacted (if student under 18 years) and asked to take the student off the centre premises for the remainder of the day. If student is over 18 years they will be asked to leave the centre premises for the remainder of the day.

Students will only be allowed to return to centre accompanied by their Parent/Guardian to meet with the Coordinator to discuss said breach of this policy.

All meetings held between the Parent/Student and Centre Authority will be recorded and held on file securely within the centre.