

St Pius X College

Magherafelt



Acceptable Use of Digital Devices Policy

Supporting – Participating – eXcelling

Note: This policy is used in conjunction with Online Safety & Acceptable Use Policy and Pupil Code of Conduct

Updated May 2020

Disclaimer:

The college accepts no responsibility for loss, theft, damage or health effects relating to any digital device in the possession of students or confiscated by staff. The decision for a digital device being brought into college is entirely at the student's and parent's own risk.

Acceptable Use Policy for Digital Devices

St Pius X College accepts that parents/carers give their children digital devices to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. The Acceptable Use Policy for Digital Devices is designed to safeguard all members of the school community.

Rationale

St Pius X College recognises digital devices as being an integral part of youth culture. However, the duty of care for each and every child in the school is paramount and this policy will attempt to weigh the balance between safeguarding, child protection and safe use of digital devices in the college.

Purpose

- To highlight the child protection issues of using digital devices technology in school.
- To inform staff, students and parents about safe digital devices use in school.
- To raise awareness of digital devices and external examination policy.
- To eliminate the use of text messaging in school as a form of bullying.
- To determine exactly when digital devices use is permitted in the school.
- Offer safety guidelines to the students on general digital devices use.
- To outline the consequences of not adhering to our digital devices policy.

Digital Devices use in school

- For Safeguarding and Child Protection reasons, students are permitted to bring digital devices into school. For these same reasons, students may not use digital devices in the course of the school day without the explicit permission of staff. The school recognises the importance of emerging technologies present in modern portable devices and teachers may wish to utilise these functions to aid teaching and learning.
- Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of an emergency, the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact.
- Digital devices must be switched off at all times during the school day within the college grounds, from entry onto the school premises until after 3.30pm and including both break and lunch times.
- St Pius X College does not accept responsibility for damage to, nor loss of any digital devices, regardless of the circumstance.
- Under no circumstances is any student permitted to take a photo, video or sound recording on the school premises.
- Any student found to be up-loading recordings to the internet depicting the College brand, or involving students in school uniform, will be the subject of a disciplinary enquiry and serious disciplinary sanctions.
- The use of digital devices is strictly prohibited in the examination hall. This means switched off and handed to the invigilator. According to exam regulations, if students are found with digital devices they run the risk of being disqualified from public examinations

Safe use of Digital Devices

- Students should only give their number to close friends and family that they can trust. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.
- Students should report to a member of staff if someone has taken a picture/video/sound recording of them in school.
- Students should report to a trusted adult if they receive any text message which is offensive. It is best that students do not delete this text until you have shown it to an adult.

Advice to parents

If there is an emergency situation where you must contact your child, please phone the school office (028 7963 2186) and we will contact your child immediately.

Guidelines on adherence to this policy

- Students must not use their digital devices within the college grounds without explicit permission of a staff member. If a student has their digital device out they will be asked to turn it off and return it to their pocket/school bag.
- Students who visibly use their digital device will be asked to forfeit their device until the end of the day. Staff should bring the device to the General Office where it will be placed in an envelope with the student's name and class and the date written on it and locked in the school safe. Retained digital devices can be collected during office hours by a parent/guardian.
- Where a student misuses their digital device, i.e. taking photos, videos, etc. or to record an image or to make an audio recording of any member of the college community without their permission they will be reported directly to the Head of Year or a member of the designated Safeguarding & Child Protection team. The device may be retained in the office and returned to the parent at an arranged meeting with staff members of the Safeguarding Team. Serious inappropriate misuse of digital devices will result in a severe sanction and/or involvement of external agencies e.g. PSNI and social services.
- Students are informed of the above in the Student Homework Diary and during Year Group Assembly as part of the College Code of Conduct.

Summary

- The protection of your child is of paramount importance to us.
- For Safeguarding and Child Protection reasons, students are permitted to bring digital devices into school. Digital devices must be switched off when on the school premises (including of break time and lunch time). For these same reasons, students may not use digital devices in the course of the school day without the explicit permission of staff.
- If a student needs to make an urgent call, he/she should contact their Form Teacher and this will be accommodated.
- If there is a breach of policy procedures, the digital device will be confiscated, placed in an envelope and can be collected after 3.15pm at reception by the student's parent/guardian.
- We hope that you appreciate the need for this policy and trust that you will support us in this respect.