Mobile Phone / Electronic Devices Policy

Barntown National School
Roll No. 17913Q

1. Introduction

This policy outlines Barntown National School's approach to the possession, use and management of mobile phones and personal electronic devices by pupils. It has been developed in accordance with Circular 0044/2025 – Banning the use of and access to personal mobile phones by pupils during the school day, issued by the Department of Education and Youth in June 2025.

This policy applies to all pupils for the full school day, including class time, break times, lunchtime, school tours, and all school-related activities.

2. Rationale

The widespread ownership of mobile phones, smart devices, smartwatches and wearables presents challenges for primary schools. While digital technology plays an important role in teaching and learning when used in a planned and purposeful way under teacher supervision, personal mobile devices can:

- Cause distraction and disruption to learning
- Negatively impact pupils' wellbeing and social interaction
- Increase the risk of bullying, including cyberbullying
- Provide access to age-inappropriate material
- Create child protection and data protection concerns through the recording and sharing of images, video or audio

Following a Parents' Association survey in September 2024, 94% of parents/guardians who responded agreed to a Smart Phone Ban Voluntary Code, committing not to give smartphones to children during their primary school years.

3. Relationship to School Ethos

Barntown National School is committed to providing a safe, respectful and nurturing environment where every child can thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

The prohibition of personal mobile phones and unauthorised electronic devices during the school day supports this ethos by:

- Promoting face-to-face interaction and positive play
- Supporting pupil wellbeing and positive behaviour
- Protecting pupils' privacy and safety
- Enabling pupils to engage fully in teaching and learning

4. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies:

- During the entire school day, including arrival, break times, lunchtime and dismissal
- On school premises and grounds
- On school tours, swimming, sporting events and all school-related activities

The policy does not apply to travel to and from school once pupils are no longer under the supervision of school staff.

5. General Policy Statement

In accordance with Circular 0044/2025, the use of and access to personal mobile phones by pupils is prohibited for the duration of the school day.

Barntown National School does not allow pupils to bring mobile phones or personal electronic devices to school.

6. Internal School Procedures

Pupils

- Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones, smartwatches, recording or personal internet-connected devices to school.
- Pupils who need to contact home during the school day may do so only through the office phone with the school secretary,
- Parents/guardians should contact pupils only by contacting the school phone or the class teacher via Aladdin

Devices Brought to School

- Any mobile phone or personal electronic device found in use or accessible during the school day will be confiscated and held securely.
- Confiscated devices will be returned to a parent/guardian only.
- The Board of Management accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personal devices brought to school.

7. Exemptions

The school will adopt a compassionate, fair and transparent approach to exemptions, in line with Circular 0044/2025.

Exemptions may be granted only where there is a clear and agreed need for:

- Medical monitoring (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy)
- Assistive technology linked to special educational needs
- Specific wellbeing or safeguarding needs

Exemption Procedure:

- Parents/guardians must apply in writing to the Principal via the Aladdin noticeboard
- Exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- Approved exemptions will be documented and reviewed annually
- Devices permitted under exemption must be used solely for the agreed purpose

Where an exemption relates to an after-school activity, the device must be:

- Turned off upon arrival at school
- Handed to the class teacher at the start of the day
- Returned only at the end of the school day

8. Recording, Photography and Data Protection

The use of personal mobile phones or electronic devices to record, photograph or film pupils or staff is strictly prohibited.

Any such behaviour will be treated as serious or gross misbehaviour and addressed in line with the school's Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Procedures and Data Protection Policy. Where illegal material is suspected, An Garda Síochána may be informed.

9. Sanctions

Failure to comply with this policy will be addressed in accordance with the School Code of Behaviour and may include:

- Confiscation of the device
- Checking device for photos/recordings taken in school
- Return of the device to a parent/guardian only
- Progressive disciplinary measures for repeated breaches
- Withdrawal of any previously granted exemption

10. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff share responsibility for the implementation of this policy. Parents/guardians are asked to support and cooperate fully with the school in ensuring compliance.

11. Review and Ratification

This policy was ratified at a meeting of the Board of Management on 9th February 2026
It will be reviewed in the 2027/2028 school year.

A copy of this policy is available from the school office and on the school website.