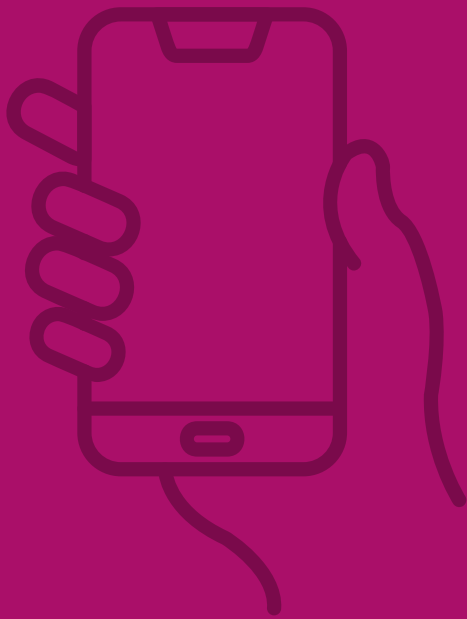
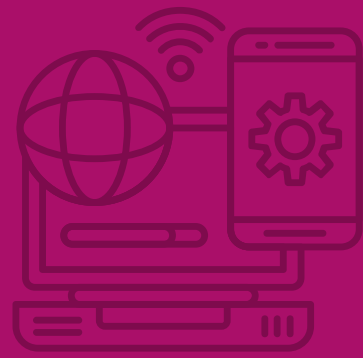




Smart Device Policy



Claregalway
Educate Together
NATIONAL SCHOOL

Introduction/Rationale:

The aim of this policy is to, firstly, protect the welfare, well-being and safety of all within our school community and, secondly, to provide an environment that is conducive to excellent teaching and learning. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and legislation:

- Code of Behaviour
- Bí Cineálta
- Acceptable Internet Use Policy
- Education Act, 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000

As an Educate Together school, our Ethos underpins all policies and practices in Claregalway ETNS. It informs the values promoted in our school, how the formal and hidden curricula are delivered, and the nature of the relationships within our school.

Relationship to Ethos

As such, CETNS is committed to and underpinned by our core values of:

- Kindness
- Respect
- Inclusivity

Definition of Smart Devices:

A smart device is an electronic device, generally connected to other devices or networks via different wireless protocols such as Bluetooth, NFC, Wi-Fi, LiFi, 3G, etc. Examples of smart devices include but are not limited to iPods, iPads, tablets, mobile phones, smart watches, digital cameras, Kindles and gaming devices.

Any device capable of taking photos, used for gaming or that uses data, such as a smartwatch or digital camera, falls under this policy.



Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

Voluntary Smartphone Agreement

In response to the myriad of concerns and challenges surrounding the use of mobile phones by children and in alignment with the Department of Education's guidance on [Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free](#), the [Wellbeing Framework](#) and the [Cinéaltas Action Plan on Bullying](#), the smart device safety committee of Claregalway ETNS and SN Bhaile Chláir na Gaillimhe united to form a Smart Device Safety Committee.

In response to a parental survey, the committee has developed a voluntary smartphone agreement in which parents can decide to **delay** smartphone ownership among primary school students. This can help reduce peer pressure and empower parents to resist early demands from their children.

All parents are encouraged to sign the voluntary agreement. Further details are available [here](#).

Commitment to a Safe and Supportive Environment

CETNS is dedicated to maintaining a safe, nurturing learning environment where the personal dignity and rights of every member of our school community are respected and upheld.

We recognise that technology, including mobile phones, is an integral part of modern life. However, we are also mindful of the potential negative impacts that mobile



phone use can have on student wellbeing and learning. **To support students in being present, attentive, and engaged, students are not permitted to bring mobile phones or smart devices to school.**

Our curriculum includes programmes that educate students about the impact of mobile phone use, helping them to make informed and responsible choices in a digital world.

This policy will also apply to school trips and during after-school activities.

Procedure:

1. It is school policy that children are **not** allowed to bring mobile phones and internet-enabled devices to school with the exception of those specifically approved by the school for educational purposes. Approved devices may include those recommended in an educational report or devices provided by the school to enhance learning.
2. Pupils who bring a phone or other electronic device to school will have their phone/device confiscated and it will be necessary for a parent/guardian to call the school to have the phone/device returned to them. Repeated breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the school Code of Behaviour.
3. An exception to this rule will be made where there is a legitimate reason for a child to have a phone or device such as for example medical monitoring. In instances such as this, the parent/guardian **must email the school with a request to meet with the principal to discuss.**
4. At this meeting, the parent/guardian will be required to complete a form stating the exceptional circumstances for which a mobile phone is required and also indicating that they accept the school procedures and their responsibilities therein.
5. Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child's online activity/digital footprint to ensure they are aware of their child's online interactions and approve of same.

Support Structures

Claregalway ETNS has support structures in place to ensure the appropriate use of electronic devices in school and to ensure staff, families and pupils feel supported in their appropriate use:



1. As part of the Primary School Curriculum implementation, learning outcomes across curricular areas focus on the appropriate use of technology at school and at home. Initiatives such as Internet Safety Week, Cyberbreak Digital Detox, Anti-bullying Week, Friendship week provide opportunities to create an awareness of safe use of digital devices.
2. The school provides regular Online Safety and cyberbullying workshops for pupils from 3rd – 6th class. The Department of Education recommended Webwise resources are used in class lessons.
3. The school website has a dedicated website on Internet Safety and provides information and guidance to families on appropriate use of technology
4. Families are invited to participate in the Keeping Children Smartphone Free Voluntary Agreement to support families in their decision not to provide a smartphone to their children while in primary school.
5. The Parents Association provide Online Safety and cyberbullying talks for parents and guardians of children in all classes.
6. Community Gardaí are invited to link in with classes re Online Safety and cyberbullying.
7. Staff regularly partake in Continuous Professional Development in relation to Acceptable Use of Technology, Internet Safety and Cineáltas Action Plan on Bullying.

Policy Review and Community Consultation

We acknowledge that technology is constantly evolving. As such, our policies will continue to adapt in response to new developments. We are committed to ongoing consultation and research regarding the impact of mobile phone use on all members of our school community.

Legislation:

This policy is drafted with the following legislation in mind:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988
- Child Protection Procedures 2023
- GDPR Data protection act 2018
- Cineáltas Action Plan on Bullying

