



MOBILE PHONE POLICY

MARIST COLLEGE ATHLONE

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Introductory Statement

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
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy

Marist College recognises that mobile phones are now an integral part of young people's lives and that they can have considerable value when used appropriately. However, in a school setting, it has been our experience that mobile phones and personal smart devices can prevent effective teaching and learning from taking place and inhibit the social development of students. Additionally, instances of inappropriate photographing/videoing of members of the school community and inappropriate communications via social media apps can heighten anxiety and stress levels amongst our students and in some severe cases this can lead to incidents of bullying.

Mobile Phone Process

- Marist College is a **Mobile Phone-free zone** during the school day i.e. 08:45 - 15:30 (including break and lunchtimes) on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and 08:45 - 13:00 on Fridays.
- If a student wishes to bring a mobile phone to school, they must purchase a **Phone Away Pouch** which is their property for the duration of their education in Marist College.
- If a student does not wish to purchase a Phone Away Pouch, they are not permitted to have a mobile in their possession during school hours.
- Parents / Guardians are asked to notify the school if their son chooses not to bring a Mobile Phone to school for the current academic year.
- Please note students are only permitted to bring one mobile phone to school.
- Should a student choose to bring a phone to school, it must be switched off and placed in their **Phone Away Pouch at the beginning of period 1 (08:45) at the latest**, and be kept there for the day. **Their Phone Away Pouch is to be kept with them for the school day**. Inspections will be carried out by year heads during period 1 and at various times throughout the day by senior management.
- It is the student's responsibility to keep their Phone Away Pouch containing their phone in a safe and secure location (e.g. on their person or in their school locker during the school day). **Marist College accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.**
- At the end of the school day, students will unlock their pouch, using the unlocking stations provided at various locations around the school.
- If a student arrives after 08:45, they must sign in at the front office as normal and lock their phone in their **Phone Away Pouch upon arrival**.
- If a student needs to leave school early, they will release their phone from its Phone Away pouch at the Main Office, as they are signing out in the usual fashion.
- The Phone Away Pouch may be opened by a teacher using a portable unlocking device for supervised phone use during class activities. The phone may only be used for the purpose instructed by the teacher and any alternative use would be deemed a breach of this policy. Phones **must** be secured in the Phone Away Pouch upon completion of the educational activity.
- For school excursions and trips, students should have their phone secured in the Phone Away Pouch for the bus journey. When necessary, the accompanying teacher will unlock the Phone Away Pouch using the portable unlocking device, to allow students to access their phone for a period of time. Phones **must** be secured in the Phone Away Pouch upon return to the bus.

Breach of the Mobile Phone Policy

- Any student found with a mobile phone not in their Phone Away Pouch or found using a mobile phone during school hours **will have the phone confiscated for three consecutive school days.**
- Phones **will not** be returned to students.
- The phone will be placed in the Deputy Principal's Office and Parents / Guardians will be contacted. **Phones will be available for collection by Parents / Guardians from the Deputy Principal's office on any school day between 09:30 and 16:30 and before 14:30 on Fridays.**
- If a student is in breach of this Policy for a second time, the phone will be confiscated again, as above, **and the student will receive an official detention.**
- Repeated breaches of this Policy may lead to **further and more serious sanctions up to and including suspension(s).**
- Should a student bring a second mobile phone to school in addition to the phone placed in their Phone Away Pouch (or in place of a confiscated mobile phone) both phones will be confiscated. Such behaviour will be considered a serious breach of school rules and will result in immediate suspension from school.
- Students who say they have not brought a phone to school, and are subsequently found to have one, are liable to be suspended.

Forgotten / Damaged Pouches

- Any loss or damage of the Phone Away Pouch, which renders it unusable, will result in the student funding a replacement Phone Away Pouch at a cost of €15.
- If a student forgets their Phone Away Pouch, a spare pouch will be available from the front office and must be returned at the end of the school day. Repeated instances will require the purchase of a new pouch.
- All Phone Away Pouches will be inspected periodically to ensure that they are still functional and being kept in good order.
- **Any student who purposely interferes with or damages their Phone Away Pouch or the Phone Away Pouch of any other student is liable to a serious sanction, up to and including suspension.**

Communication between parents and students during school hours

- All communication with home in respect of illness or emergencies is to be made through the school office. The student school phone is made readily available, free of charge, for such communication. For safety reasons, it is important that school management is aware of students leaving the school premises during the day so mobile phones are not to be used to contact parents for this purpose.
- Parents/Guardians who need to contact a pupil urgently may do so by calling the school office at 09064 74491 or by sending an email to the school office at info@maristathlone.net. If the phone is unattended at that time, you can leave a message on the answering machine. As the answering service is checked at regular intervals, any messages will be promptly relayed to students.

Communication and Ratification

This policy will be posted on the school website. Any parent wishing to obtain a copy may collect one from the school office.
Ratified by the Board of Management on 12th of June 2024.

Signed John O'Connell
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 12/06/2024

Signed Michael Healy
(Principal /Secretary BOM)

Date: 12/06/2024

Signed: Student _____

Date: ____/____/____

Signed: Parent/Guardian _____

Date: ____/____/____