



Mobile Phone & Electronic Devices Policy

Lucan Educate Together N.S.

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1. Introduction & Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones/electronic devices by school students is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Technology undoubtedly provides great potential for high quality teaching and learning, however, the use of technology requires clear guidance and secure supervision. The school encourages the use of technology to support engagement and improve outcomes in learning across the curriculum while also ensuring that students become competent and proficient digital learners.

The use of personal mobile phones/electronic devices presents a number of challenges and concerns, which include but are not limited to:

- vulnerability to theft
- distraction from focused learning
- providing a platform with the potential for bullying to occur
- negative impact on wellbeing
- privacy concerns related to the dissemination of images, video and audio whether known or unbeknownst to the individuals involved

2. Ethos

The provision of a safe and secure school environment, ensuring that the dignity of both children and adults is respected and the creation of an atmosphere that is conducive to learning are all central to the mission of Lucan ETNS. The potential misuse of mobile phones/electronic devices is not compatible with these goals or the general school ethos.

3. Statement of Policy

The Board of Management of Lucan ETNS prohibits the possession of and use of mobile phones/personal electronic devices by students while on the school premises or involved in school activities such as tours, trips or extra-curricular activities.

This Policy acknowledges that there are exceptional circumstances in which a child will need access to a mobile phone off school grounds and therefore need their phone in their possession.

This Policy allows for these cases. Permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will require the express written request of parents/guardians (Appendix A). The Board of Management asks parents/guardians to only make such a request if it is absolutely necessary for the child's safety during the journey to and from school.

Electronic Devices includes Smart Watches. A smart watch is defined as a watch with the ability to make/receive calls, text messages, take photographs and/or video content. A simple wristwatch or fitness trackers (that do not include any of the above technologies) are permitted.

4. School Procedures

- It is not permitted for students in Lucan ETNS to bring a mobile phone or any electronic device to school or to any school related event unless they are previously registered as being allowed to carry a phone for the journey to and from school.
- Such permission must be requested in writing (Appendix A) by the parents/guardians of the child, such permission to be sought annually.
- Where permission is granted, Appendix A must be signed by both the parent/guardian and the student and returned to the school and must include the contact details for the parent/guardian. A register of students with permission will be kept by class teachers.
- All phones carried by students must be turned off outside the gates of the school and are not allowed to be turned back on until the child is outside the school premises when leaving. There are no exceptions to this rule other than the express permission of a teacher, which will only be given in exceptional circumstances and must be received before the phone is turned on.
- All permitted phones must be handed to the class teacher at the beginning of the day and will be returned before the student leaves. Any student found with a phone in their possession during the school day will be judged to be in contravention of this policy whether the phone is turned off or not.
- All phones being brought to school and handed up must be clearly labelled with the student's name and class.
- The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen on the way to or from school or for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones while in the care of the school.

- Please note that if parents/guardians need to be contacted during the school day this will be done via the school office at the request of the class teacher. All phone contacts for parents and guardians should be kept up to date.

5. Sanctions

Students will be viewed as being in breach of this policy in the following instances:

- students who have a mobile phone/electronic device in their possession without permission
- students who have permission to carry a mobile phone but do not hand it up to the class teacher, whether or not the phone is turned on
- any student who has a phone turned on or in use in any way on the school premises or any school-related activity (including but not limited to school tours, sporting events and extra-curricular activities)

In all such cases the phone in question will be confiscated immediately. Parents will be notified and confiscated phones must be signed for and collected by a parent/guardian at the school office. In addition the school will treat any such breach of this policy as they would treat other breaches of school discipline in accordance with both the Code of Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy. Please reference the Code of Behaviour for Lucan ETNS on www.letns.org which is also available by request in hard copy from the office. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

It should be noted that our Anti-Bullying policy currently states:

“In the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.”

6. Vision & Aims

Lucan ETNS aims to reduce the potential for misuse of mobile phones/electronic devices and create an environment where students become digitally literate learners and engage with

technology in a manner which is consistent with our core values. The roles and responsibilities of all in creating a constructive, kind and respectful online environment will be communicated. This policy is designed to protect our students from potential harm and to improve their own wellbeing by allowing them a safe space to disconnect. Finally, we hope that through creating an open, honest and supportive environment our students will feel confident in sharing their concerns or experiences with a trusted adult so they may be supported effectively.

7. Support Structures & Role of School Staff

Lucan ETNS endeavours to have support structures in place to ensure the appropriate use of electronic devices in school and to ensure staff, parents and students feel supported in same.

- The school will provide Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying talks for students from 3rd – 6th class.
- The school will provide Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying talks for parents/guardians to all parents in the school.
- Community Gardaí link in with classes re. Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying.
- Staff will regularly partake in Continuous Professional Development in relation to AUP, internet safety and Cyber Bullying.
- The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of online platforms.

Lucan ETNS is mindful of the duties and responsibilities assigned to staff in working with children, therefore, it is important that staff be engaged with children at all times. In this context, access to and the use of mobile phones should be limited to urgent school business. Staff in Lucan ETNS are aware of their responsibilities to be positive role models for students.

9. Guidelines for Staff

- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discreet' mode, with 'vibrate' off.
- Mobile Phones should be kept in a safe, secure place.

- Mobile phones will not be used for texting or phone calls within teaching/pupil contact time except in the case of emergency.
- Calls for school business e.g. checking a booking for school tour, making arrangements for sporting events etc. should be done on the school phone.
- If a situation arises whereby a staff member needs to be contactable please speak to Principal or Deputy Principal and necessary arrangements will be put in place. Also ensure you provide persons with the school landline, in case they are unable to contact you.
- School phone/school approved applications should be used to contact parents.

The Board of Management advises all staff to keep their personal mobile phone number and online activity private.

10. Guidelines for Parents

- The Staff and BOM recognise the parents as the child's primary educator and believe that parents have an important role to play in ensuring their child's appropriate and safe use of electronic devices.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child's online activity/digital footprint. Parents are encouraged to check social media apps (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Viber, WhatsApp, Instagram etc.) on mobile phones and electronic devices to ensure they are aware of their child's online interaction with others and approve of same.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to talk with their child regularly about their use of electronic devices and discuss who their child is interacting with and the content of such interactions.
- Parents are asked to participate in internet safety talks held in the school/online at least once every two years.

11. Responsibility

All Staff share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy. It is the responsibility of all Staff, Parents/Guardians and Students to adhere to this policy. This policy is subject to

regular review.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly according to the on-going schedule of review of school policies and in line with Department guidelines.

13. Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in October 2023 and subsequently communicated to all stakeholders. A copy of the policy is available to view on www.letns.org and a hard copy is available upon request from the school office.

Signed:

Principal

Date:

Signed:

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date:

14. Appendix A

Permission Request

I _____, (PRINT NAME) parent/guardian of _____, (PRINT NAME) would like to request that the Board of Management consider the exceptional circumstances which would permit my child to have a mobile phone/electronic device in their possession to and from school.

In making this request both myself and my child agree to follow the procedures outlined in the Mobile Phone & Electronic Devices Policy and are aware of the sanctions that will be imposed should there be any breach of the Policy.

Both myself and my child have read and understand the terms of the Mobile Phone & Electronic Devices Policy, as well as, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy and the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

Outline Exceptional Circumstances:

Parent/Guardian Contact Number:

Student Signature:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date: