

3/1/2025

Draft Mobile Phone Policy 2025-28
(Circular 0045-2025)

Castleknock Community College



Review Dates

Staff Review	October 2025	
Student Review	January /February 2026	
Parents Review	January /February 2026	
BOM	March/April 2026	

Due for next review: September 2028

Castleknock Community College

Mobile Phone Policy

1. Introduction

Castleknock Community College's Annual Digital Learning Plan 2024–2025 sets out our vision to enhance teaching, learning, and assessment through effective and ethical use of digital technologies.

This Mobile Phone & Digital Device Policy supports that vision and ensures compliance with:

- Circular 0045/2025, which requires all post-primary schools to restrict the use of and access to personal mobile phones by students during the school day; and
- Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying (2022), the Department of Education's national policy to promote kindness, prevent bullying and cyberbullying, and foster a culture of respect, inclusion and wellbeing.

Together, these frameworks promote responsible, safe and purposeful use of digital technology across our school community.

2. School Context and Vision

2.1 School Details

Castleknock Community College, established in 1995, is part of the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). It is a co-educational post-primary school catering to the growing population of the Castleknock area, providing a comprehensive curriculum and wide range of extracurricular opportunities.

Our mission is to set standards that reflect and honour the expectations of our local community.

2.2 Digital Learning Vision

At Castleknock Community College we are committed to:

- Enabling students to think critically, creatively, and collaboratively.
- Recognising the potential of technology to enhance teaching, learning, and assessment.
- Using technology to promote inclusion and participation.
- Empowering students to become responsible, ethical digital citizens.
- Embedding our values of Courtesy, Respect, and Responsibility in every aspect of digital life.

3. Digital Strengths and Infrastructure

Our school's digital capacity supports high-quality learning through:

- One-to-One Devices for all students in First Year (since 2023).
- Digital Wellbeing Programme for First & Second Years.
- Clear smartphone use guidelines for senior students.
- A dedicated Digital Team and Student Digital Leaders supporting peers and staff.
- Upgraded Wi-Fi (2024) and enhanced ICT infrastructure in classrooms and computer rooms.

4. Policy Rationale and Aims

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that mobile phone and device use supports learning, wellbeing, and inclusion.
- Promote safe, kind, and respectful behaviour in line with *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying*.
- Fulfil the requirements of Circular 0045/2025 regarding restricted mobile phone use during the school day.
- Foster digital wellbeing and minimise distraction from learning.
- Align digital practice with the school's Digital Learning Plan 2024–2025 and national frameworks.

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students, staff, and visitors to Castleknock Community College.
- All digital devices (mobile phones, laptops, tablets, smartwatches, or wearable tech), whether school-issued or personal.
- All school-related activities including classes, corridors, social areas, extracurricular events, and school trips.

6. Guiding Principles

1. Learning First – Digital tools must enhance learning outcomes.
2. Courtesy, Respect, Responsibility – All digital use must reflect our core values.
3. Digital Wellbeing – Students are supported to balance online and offline life.

4. Equity & Inclusion – Our one-to-one device rollout ensures all learners benefit.
 5. Kindness & Safety – Technology should be used in a manner consistent with *Cineáltas*, promoting kindness and preventing bullying or harassment.
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7. Device Use Guidelines

7.1 Students with One-to-One Devices (First & Second Year)

- Students are expected to use their school-issued device for educational purposes only.
- Mobile phones must be switched off and stored securely during the school day unless explicitly required by a teacher for learning.
- Students must adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and maintain digital courtesy.
- Recording, photographing, or sharing content without permission is strictly prohibited.
- Parents/guardians wishing to contact students during the school day must do so through the school office.

7.2 Students Without One-to-One Devices (Transition Year to Sixth Year)

- Phones may only be used for learning purposes under teacher supervision.
- Teachers may restrict use at any time to maintain a positive classroom atmosphere.
- Smartwatches should not be used for messaging or social media during class.

7.3 Unauthorised Use and Misuse

- Unauthorised recording, sharing, or posting of images, videos, or audio is prohibited.
- Misuse of devices to engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or exclusion will be treated as a serious breach of school policy, managed under both the Code of Behaviour and the *Cineáltas* / Anti-Bullying Policy.

7.4 Sanctions

- Students found to be using their mobile phone during school time will have their phone confiscated for the rest of the day.
- Any confiscated devices shall be forwarded to the relevant Year Head or a member of the Management Team. The teacher responsible for the confiscation shall record the incident on VS Ware. Repeat offenders will require their parents to collect their phone from the College.
- Serious or repeated breaches (e.g., unauthorised recording, online bullying, or data misuse) will be referred to Year Heads or Senior Management and addressed under the Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use Policy, and *Cineáltas*: Action Plan on Bullying framework.

8. Staff Use of Devices

- Staff are encouraged to model responsible and professional digital conduct.
- Personal phone use during class time should be limited and must not affect supervision.
- Staff should use approved digital platforms (e.g., Microsoft 365) for teaching and communication.
- All staff are expected to uphold the school's AUP, Data Protection Policy, and *Cineáltas* principles in their professional practice.

9. Digital Wellbeing and Education

- The Digital Wellbeing Programme for Junior Cycle students promotes healthy online habits and awareness of cyber-safety.
- Student Digital Leaders mentor peers and model positive online behaviour.
- The school collaborates with parents and guardians through workshops and communications on safe, balanced technology use.

10. Exception

There may be exceptional circumstances in which a student requires access to their mobile phone. In such cases, a note outlining the reason shall be recorded in the student's journal and on the VS Ware system. Examples of such circumstances include, but are not limited to, medical monitoring requirements and hearing loss.

II. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is reviewed annually by the Digital Learning Team in consultation with staff, students, and parents.

Monitoring tools include:

- Staff, student, and parent surveys.
- SELFIE and Microsoft Forms evaluations.
- Feedback from wellbeing and anti-bullying initiatives under *Cineáltas*. Adjustments will be made as necessary to ensure the policy remains effective, inclusive, and compliant with national guidelines.

12. Related Policies

- Annual Digital Learning Plan 2024–2025
 - Circular 0045/2025 (Restricting the Use of Personal Mobile Phones in Schools)
 - Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying / Bi Cineálta Policy
 - Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Wellbeing Policy
 - Data Protection Policy
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Appendix 1.

Guidelines for Using Mobile Phones in Class

The College Acceptable Use Policy states that:

The College Acceptable Use Policy states that pupils are only permitted to use personal internet-enabled devices during lessons with the **express permission of teaching staff**.

The College recognises that smartphones have applications that may support teaching and learning when used appropriately.

When smartphones are used for learning purposes, the following guidelines apply:

- Expectations for smartphone use must be clearly explained at the **start of the activity**.
- Phones must be kept **face up and flat on the desk** at all times.
- Teachers should actively monitor student use by **moving around the classroom**.
- Smartphones must **not replace textbooks, dictionaries, or calculators**. Students are expected to bring required materials to class and should not rely on their phones.
- At the end of the learning activity, students should be instructed to **switch off their phones and place them in their schoolbags**.
- When a teacher is absent, work should be **emailed or left in the staff room box**, rather than uploaded to Teams for students to download.
- Teachers who plan to use smartphones as a learning tool must ensure that students have completed and agreed to the **Class Contract**.

Guidelines for Taking Photographs in Class

On occasion, students may be required to take photographs of their work for learning purposes.

- Photographs taken in class must be of **artefacts only**, not of people.
 - Students must be explicitly instructed that **no members of the school community** (students, staff, or visitors) should be visible in any photograph taken during class time.
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