

October 13 ,2017 .

Dear Parent

As you know our core business at Coláiste na Sceilige is Teaching and Learning. Recently, however, mobile phones have proved a huge distraction from teaching and learning and are having a very negative effect on this most important aspect of school life.

The constant stream of mobile phone traffic is also affecting students' wellbeing.

I am aware that not too long ago we were happy for students to use their phones to photograph homework and notes from the board. As each student now has a password which allows them to access their Microsoft accounts they will still be in a position to access notes from their classes.

Many students are using their phones in class to text each other, some video other students and video teachers. Some students are also videoing and photographing fellow students and staff in the course of morning and lunch breaks. All of this is a huge invasion of student and teacher privacy and directly in breach of the rules of the school.

Staff have a right to feel safe in their work place Photos and video footage taken by students can immediately be uploaded to social media ...etc. completely exposing their victims. This year, we have dealt with several incidents where staff have been videoed.

Mobile phones, unsurprisingly, continue to be at the centre of many bullying incidents.

The above are only some of the inappropriate uses of phones that we are aware of. Groups of students are frequently gathered round someone's phone and may be watching anything.

Technology is advancing very quickly and proving almost impossible for us to patrol , mobile phones are also easy to conceal making them more difficult to monitor. They are taking us away from our core business of teaching and learning.

To give students respite from constant mobile phone traffic, to allow them to focus on schoolwork and to best safeguard all members of the school community: Students, teachers and staff, we are proposing a blanket ban on mobile phones on the school grounds from November 2017. Students will not be allowed use a mobile phone on the school grounds from the time they arrive in the morning until 4 pm. Students in breach of this rule will be sanctioned.

Students will have access to the phone in the secretaries' office for important communication and of course can be contacted through the office. In the case of emergencies a phone will be allowed.

Phones will be allowed on trips and outings at the discretion of the teacher in charge.

Please note that the banning of mobile phones is a proposal and no decision will be made until proper consultation with the various stakeholders has taken place.

We are aware that this will be a big change and have implications for you and your family and would like to hear what you have to say. Please contact the Students' Council or the Parents' Council with your views.

Yours sincerely

John O Connor,

Principal.