



# St. Angela's School.

## Personal Technology Policy

### **Mission Statement:**

St. Angela's is a Catholic girls' school which aims to cherish the uniqueness of each individual and to develop the full potential of each member of the school community.

### **Preamble:**

This policy refers to any personal technology device (PTD) which is commonly available and which may be part of what is considered normal social interaction through which young people regularly engage.

eg mobile telephone, Ipod, ITouch and other MP3 and MP4 units, IPad, cameras and camcorders, games consoles and hand held games devices, electronic books (Kimble etc) and other devices.

### **Rationale:**

The Management and Staff of St. Angela's School recognise that students own personal technology devices and the convenience afforded to parents / guardians by such devices. However, ours is a primarily a teaching and learning environment. The following policy aims to maintain a safe, nurturing environment where the personal dignity and rights of all the members of the school community are preserved.

Therefore, we consider it necessary to place restrictions on the use of such devices for the following reasons:

1. The risk, under Child Protection and Data Protection legislation, presented by the recording, saving and broadcasting facility of these devices.
2. The potential for the spread of inappropriate messaging.
3. The potential for the inappropriate use of internet and Bluetooth technologies.
4. The danger of adding to the stress that many students feel over keeping up with constantly updated technology and the financial implications of maintaining fashionable trends.
5. The inconvenience caused by the disruption to the teaching and learning process which alarms, signals, calls and alerts may cause.
6. The financial value and sophistication of such items, which may render the owner vulnerable to the envy / disparagement of other students and / or theft.
7. The risk to the proper running of all school and State examinations: such devices are expressly forbidden during examinations by the SEC.

8. The potential risk to the school server, which downloading of corrupt files and / or viruses may cause.

### **Scope:**

This policy refers to all students of St. Angela's School. This also refers to students on exchange programmes and visiting students.

The Policy applies at all times during the school day, from 8am (when school opens) until 6.15 pm (when school closes on a normal school day). The policy also applies to students engaging in extra-curricular activities or who are on school business or school run events, which take place outside of normal school hours. (eg. Study, retreats, matches etc.)

Visitors to the school premises or to school events are asked to refrain from the use of PTDs, unless in specifically designated staff areas.

This policy takes effect from the date of ratification.

### **Communication between the Home and students:**

Parents / Guardians are advised that the most immediate and effective way of contacting students is through the General Office. Parents / Guardians are urged to ensure that correct contact details are lodged with the General Office for all designated contacts and that any changes to these details are notified immediately. The school cannot take responsibility for acting on details which have become out of date.

Messages for students may be left in the General Office and every reasonable effort will be made to disseminate these to students appropriately.

Similarly, a student who wishes to contact parents / guardians for any reason may do so in the General Office, with the assistance of her class teacher, Class Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal (or other member of staff) when necessary.

### **Use of Personal Technology.**

Students are coached in the appropriate use of PTDs through the Pastoral Care Programme and through CSPE and SPHE classes.

In IT classes, students are advised about the danger of careless use of the internet and internet technologies.

Parents and Guardians are strongly advised to make themselves aware of the potential dangers inherent in the use of internet technologies and to put safeguards into place for the protection of their daughters.

### **Restrictions and waivers in St. Angela's School:**

NB. The use of or handling of devices named above is prohibited in St. Angela's School.

The Board of Management, Principal and staff strongly advise students to leave personal technology devices at home. Parents and Guardians are asked to discourage students from bringing such items to school.

If a student chooses to bring a PTD to school, against the wishes of school management and staff, she does so at her own risk. Devices must be kept in a locked locker. Alarms and alerts must be disabled. The device must be powered OFF. Such devices may not be stored in any other location, including school bags, uniforms, coat pockets etc.

Devices should be clearly marked in a way which permanently identifies the device for the owner.

Students may not lend a device to another student for any reason whatsoever.

Recording sound or image of any member of the school community or visitor to the school without their knowledge is absolutely forbidden.

In the event of a student engaged in extracurricular activities or travelling on school business, occasional dispensations from this policy may be made, at the discretion of the Principal. This will be communicated to students before the particular event occurs.

### **Contravention of these restrictions:**

Contravention of these restrictions is a serious matter.

**In the interest of fairness, equality and transparency, parents / guardians and students are requested to refrain from appealing this process.**

Students found to be in contravention of this policy will merit the following response from the school:

#### **First offence:**

- The device in question (and SIM card, if part of the device) will be confiscated for ten school days. This means that the device will be held securely in St. Angela's until ten school days have elapsed. The device will not be returned at weekends or school closure days until the ten days have elapsed. The school recognises the inconvenience this may cause for the student's parents / guardians. For that reason, we ask parents / guardians to encourage the student to leave her

device at home. During the period of confiscation, contact with the student can be maintained through the General Office.

- In the event that the student in contravention of the policy is not the owner of the device, the owner of the device will be informed.
- The student (and owner, if also a student of St. Angela's School) will sign a register to say that the device in question has been turned off that it has been handed into the school authorities.
- The device will be placed in an envelope, marked with the date and the student's name (and owner's name), and stored in a secure location in the school.
- The device will be returned when ten school days have elapsed, as described above.
- The device will be returned to the student from whom the device was confiscated, at the end of her school day. It is the student's responsibility to request the return of the device on the return date.
- The device will only be returned by the Principal, Deputy Principal or a named member of staff, in the case of their absence.
- When the device is returned, the student will sign the register again, to mark its return.

#### Second offence:

As above.

- The Deputy Principal will be informed.
- The student / owner's parents or guardians will be required to return a letter of support for this policy.

#### Third and subsequent offence:

- As above.
- The matter will be referred to the Principal, for her consideration. Third and subsequent offences may merit suspension, at the discretion of the Principal.

In addition, the following offences, or other matters of gravity, may merit immediate suspension, at the discretion of the Principal.

- The use of a PTD to send or forward inappropriate messaging.
- The taking, saving, sharing and/ or broadcasting of any recording (sound or image).
- Inappropriate / unsanctioned use of the internet.

#### **Rights and Responsibilities.**

The owner of the device brings the device to school at her own risk, against the wishes of school management.

The school takes no responsibility for the loss or theft of or damage to a PTD at any time. The safety and security of any device brought to school is entirely the responsibility of the owner of the device. This

remains the case even if reasonable attempts at storing the device safely have been made by the owner or the school.

The school takes no responsibility for any inappropriate use that is made of such a device.

The school reserves the right to view and / or copy the contents of a device, in the presence of the student, to ensure it contains no images or information which could compromise a member of the school community. Any such information or images will be deleted from the device.

The school will not accept any appeals to this policy, which are not made in the proper manner ie in writing to the Principal.

The school reserves the right to refer matters of concern to the Garda Síochána, HSE or other authorities, as appropriate.

### **Evaluation.**

School management will accept feedback from staff, students and parents made through the proper use of the appropriate channels ie staff meetings, student committees and PSAC. This feedback will inform periodic evaluation of the policy by management.

**Date of ratification of reviewed policy: 11/4/19**