**Castaheany Educate Together National School**

**Mobile Phone & Smart Devices Policy for our School Community**

**Rationale:**

The possession and use of mobile phones and other smart devices by school pupils is now commonplace, even in the primary school sector. Appropriate use of mobile phones and smart devices are welcomed at CETNS and these devices are seen as valuable educational tools. At the same time, the school recognises the potential challenges/risks associated with the use of mobile phones and smart devices, some of which are listed below:

* Use of mobile phones and smart devices with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.
* Mobile phones and smart devices can be valuable items and could potentially be damaged in school or may render a pupil vulnerable to theft.
* Mobile phones and smart devices may make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying.
* Mobile phones and other smart devices can be very intrusive, distracting and antisocial when used in a school environment.

**Definition of Smart Device:**

A smart device is an electronic device, generally connected to other devices or networks via different wireless protocols such as Bluetooth, NFC, Wi-Fi, LiFi, 3G, etc. Examples of smart devices include but are not limited to iPods, iPads, smart watches, Kindles, gaming devices and fitness trackers.

**Aims & Objectives:**

* To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones and smart devices at our school.
* To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

**Guidelines:**

* The Mobile Phone & Smart Devices Policy is consistent with the school’s Code of Good Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Acceptable Use Policies and any inappropriate use of mobile phones and/or smart devices will be treated in accordance with these policies.
* Pupils are not permitted to bring smart devices to school. These include, but are not limited to iPods, iPads, smart watches, Kindles, gaming devices and fitness trackers.
* In exceptional circumstances Senior Leadership may give permission to bring and use smart devices in school.
* Pupils do not need mobile phones at school and are requested not to bring them to school. We ask for parents’ co-operation in this matter.
* If, however, a parents feels that a child genuinely needs to bring their phone to school, a permission form must be signed and returned to the school.
* If a mobile phone is deemed absolutely necessary and the relevant form has been signed, pupils must:
1. **Switch off their phone at the outer school gates, when entering the school grounds in the morning.**
2. **The phone can be switched on again at the outer gates, when they leave the school grounds.**
3. **At 8.30 the pupil must give their phone to their class teacher to lock away until 2.10.**
4. **Children can collect their phone from their teacher at 2.10, or on a half day, 12.00.**
5. **Pupils may not bring their phone on school trips or events. Phones must be handed up on arrival to school. They will be locked away and returned to pupils on return from trip/event.**
6. **It is the pupils’ responsibility to hand up and collect their phone each day.**
* If any pupil brings a mobile phone to school, without permission from the principal/class teacher, that phone will be confiscated and kept in the office until a parent comes to collect it.
* Even with permission, if a pupil is found with/using a phone during school hours, or if their phone rings/beeps in the classroom, that phone will also to taken to the office and the parents will be asked to come and collect the phone.
* In the event of the pupil continuously breaking the above rules, Senior Leadership will inform parents that the pupil is no longer permitted to bring their mobile phone to school.

**Guidelines for Parents:**

* Parents must complete a Mobile Phone consent form and return to school if they wish their child to be permitted to bring a mobile phone to school.
* Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly, and helped in any appropriate way.
* If a staff member has reason to believe that a mobile phone has unsuitable material stored on it, pupils will be required to hand over the phone to a teacher and parents will be asked to collect it from the school. Where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a criminal offence the phone will be handed over to the Gardaí for further investigation. Parents will be informed in such circumstances.
* The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones. The safety and security of mobile phones is wholly a matter for pupils/parents.
* The school accepts no responsibility for pupils who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

**Guidelines for Staff:**

* Personal phone calls may not be made or taken and personal text messages may not be sent or read during teaching time/yard duty unless in exceptional circumstances.
* If a staff member needs to make/take an important call they may organise supervision for their pupils and leave the room to do so.
* Teachers are encouraged to be discerning in their use of mobile phones as an educational tool during class lessons.
* Mobile phones and smart devices can be used by staff during the day for communicating with other school staff and also for educational purposes, using application such as E-share, WhatsApp, Aladdin, Google Classroom and email.

This policy was created in consultation with staff, parents and the Board of Management, The policy was ratified by the Board of Management and will be reviewed regularly when deemed necessary.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson). Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_