MOBILE PHONE POLICY

November 2025

PRESENTATION COLLEGE HEADFORD

MOBILE PHONE/DEVICES POLICY

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Development of Policy:	
August 2025	Initial Discussions with Staff
September 2025	Initial Draft (Senior Management Team and Policy Secretariat)
October 2025	Working Committee established Period of Staff, Parent, Student Consultation
November 10th 2025	Draft 3 drawn up by SMT and Policy Secretariat
November 2025	Finalisation of Draft & Input of Feedback for sending to the BOM
November 10th 2025	Ratified by the BOM

Introduction

This policy is developed in accordance with **Department of Education and Youth Circular 0045/2025**, which requires all post-primary schools to implement restrictions on students' use of mobile phones, electronic devices, and smartwatches during the school day. The wellbeing of our students remains a key priority. While we recognise the many benefits that technology brings to modern life, research clearly shows that unrestricted mobile phone use in schools can negatively affect learning, concentration, social interaction, and mental health. The purpose of this policy is to foster a focused and respectful learning environment that encourages meaningful, face-to-face engagement and supports the overall wellbeing of all students.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Code of Behaviour, Bí Cineálta Policy, Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025 and the Acceptable Use Policy.

Scope:

This policy applies to all members of our school community including students, parents and all staff at Presentation College Headford, and outlines the expectations regarding the restriction of mobile phone use in accordance with Circular 0045/2025.

Aim:

Presentation College Headford recognises and acknowledges the positive aspects of students' use of mobile phones and other electronic recording/ communication devices. The school recognises that mobile phones/electronic devices can be a powerful source of learning and that they represent a valuable educational tool. However, the school also recognises that student use of mobile phones/electronic devices presents a number of problems/risks prompting the need for restrictions on their use.

While Presentation College Headford accepts that it is a student's right to have a mobile phone, the following policy aims to maintain a safe, nurturing environment where the personal dignity and rights of all members of the school community are preserved, and to provide an environment that maintains excellence in teaching and learning.

This policy applies to **all students** in Presentation College Headford and covers mobile phones, smart watches, and any electronic device capable of communication or internet access (collectively referred to as "devices").

Rationale:

1. To promote focused learning and reduce distractions in the classroom
2. To ensure that teaching and learning can proceed without interruption
3. To encourage positive face to face social interaction during break and lunchtime
4. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community by maintaining an environment that respects all members of the school community
5. To assist in the prevention of bullying via mobile phone and electronic devices
6. To protect all members of the school community from uninvited attention via mobile phone/internet, camera or video technology
7. To support overall student wellbeing

8. To support the school ethos and mission statement
9. To maintain and promote the school Code of Behaviour and school policies

Mobile Phone Guidelines:

1. Students' phones must be switched off between **8.55 am and 4.01pm.**
2. Phones which are discovered turned on during school activities will be confiscated. Switched off does not mean 'Silent', 'Airplane Mode', 'Meeting' or any similar mode. The phone must be **powered off**.
3. In order to assist the school in implementing this policy, parents/guardians shall not contact students by mobile phone at any time during the school day. Contact with the school may be made through the main office.
4. A student who wishes to go home for any reason during the school day shall arrange to do so through the school office and not independently by mobile phone. This ensures that correct procedures for leaving school before the end of the school day are observed. Responsibility will not be taken by the school authorities for students who arrange independently to go home without following the proper procedure. Any such arrangement is a breach of the Code of Behaviour for students and will incur sanctions.

Implementation and Compliance:

1. Mobile phones must be **switched off between 8:55 a.m. and 4:01 p.m.**
2. Upon entering the classroom, students shall **place their phones in the designated area** (basket or table at the top/front of the room). It is the students' responsibility to ensure they follow this procedure when entering a classroom.
3. Phones must remain there for the duration of each class unless permission is given from the class teacher for a class related activity.
4. Teachers may encourage the appropriate use of mobile phones/electronic devices as an aid to learning in classrooms and other learning settings in the school. In this case, the phone/electronic device must only be used for the specific task outlined by the teacher and must be powered off and put away when the task is completed.
5. Mobile phones/electronic devices/smart watches shall not be used for any purpose unless directed to do so by a teacher.
6. Students with mobile phones/electronic devices shall not engage in personal attacks, harass others or post private information about another person either inside or outside of school time via SMS messages/phone calls/chat rooms/social networking sites or by taking/sending/uploading photos, etc.
7. Mobile phones/electronic devices/smart watches shall not be used to gain advantage in exams or assessments. Any student found using a mobile phone/electronic device to gain advantage in exams or assessments will face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the school and automatically referred to the Code of Behaviour.
8. Students are not permitted to use mobile phones between classes, during breaks, or at lunchtime. Phones may only be used briefly when necessary to pay for food, and must be switched off immediately afterward. Students are encouraged to use cash or cards instead.
9. During assessments (Midterm, Christmas, Mocks & Summer) all students must place their phone and smart watch, if appropriate, in a box at the top or outside of the gym/classroom. The phone must be **powered off** at all times. This replicates the procedures for state exams and is good practice in preparation for such exams.

Non-Compliance Procedure:

If a student is found to be in breach of this policy by any member of school staff the following will apply:

1. The student's phone will be confiscated and placed in the school office where the student may collect it at the end of the school day.
2. A mobile phone referral sheet will be given to the respective Year Head
   1st referral - Verbal Warning issued by the Referring Teacher
   2nd referral - Lunchtime detention assigned by the Year head
   3rd referral - Student's phone will be placed in a pouch by a member of the SLT team on an assigned day for the duration of a full school day.
      i. Those students will need to have cash/card to pay for their lunch as the pouch will not be opened on that day until 4pm.
      ii. Any subsequent referrals will result in a repeat of this procedure for 1 school day or for more than one school day at the discretion of the Principal. The phone will be removed from the pouch each day at 4pm.

   Any attempts to evade or undermine the above sanction will result in an immediate referral and will be severely dealt with under the Code of Behaviour.
3. Continued non-compliance will be treated as a serious breach of school rules and dealt with under the Code of Behaviour.
4. Defiance or refusal to hand up their phone will result in an immediate referral to the Code of Behaviour.

Serious Breaches (recording/photographing others, cyber-bullying, accessing inappropriate content):

- Device confiscated and retained pending investigation
- Parents/guardians contacted immediately
- Incident investigated under the Acceptable Use Policy, Code of Behaviour, Bí Cineálta Policy and/or Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025
- Sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion may apply
- Gardaí may be contacted where criminal activity is suspected

A once-off serious offence will be dealt with directly under the Acceptable Usage Policy and the Code of Behaviour. All sanctions up to and including expulsion will be considered depending on the gravity of the offence.

Criminal Law:

In line with our Acceptable Usage Policy it should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/electronic device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may report the offence to An Garda Síochána and or Tusla.

Theft or Damage:

The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/electronic devices.

- The safety and security of mobile phones/electronic devices is wholly in the hands of the student.

- The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones/electronic devices stolen while travelling to and from school or during any school related activity.
- It is strongly advised that students mark their mobile phones/electronic devices clearly with their name.

It is also advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students or if stolen). These passwords/pin numbers should be kept confidential and should not be shared. Mobile phones/electronic devices which are found on the school premises, should be handed into the school office.

Exemptions:

Limited Exceptions – Medical/Accessibility Requirements

Medical, wellbeing or additional educational needs exemptions may be requested through school management with regard to this policy. All applications accompanied by relevant supporting documentation will be handled confidentially. Possible issues may include but are not limited to the following:

a. Diabetes blood glucose monitor and/or insulin mechanism
b. Blood pressure monitoring
c. Seizure conditions where monitoring via a mobile phone app is needed
d. Mental health conditions
e. Additional educational needs
f. Access to specific applications for EAL students etc.

Role and Responsibilities

- Board of Management: Policy approval and oversight
- Principal/Deputy Principal: Policy implementation, monitoring, sanctions
- All staff: Enforce policy, confiscate devices, report breaches
- Parents/Guardians: Support policy, ensure student compliance, collect confiscated devices when required
- Students: Comply with policy requirements

Legal Context

The Board of Management is committed to the implementation of this policy with particular regard to the following legislation:

• Department of Education and Youth Circular 0045/2025

• The Education Act of 1998

• The Equal Status Act of 2000

• The Education Welfare Act of 2000

• The Health & Safety and Welfare Act 2005

• The Children First Act 2015

• Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, 2024.

Acknowledgement and Acceptance

We confirm that we have read and understood the School Mobile Phone/Devices Policy of Presentation College Headford. We agree to support its implementation in full and understand the expectations placed on students and parents/guardians.

To be completed and signed by the student and parent(s)/guardian(s):

Student Name: _____
Year Group: _____
Student Signature: _____
Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____
Parent/Guardian Signature(s): _____
Date: _____

Approved by the Board of Management of Presentation College Headford on:

Date: _____

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed:_____ Principal