



St Brigid's BNS and GNS Parents Association Voluntary 'Smart Phone Free' Code of Practice

Dear Parents

Thank you for your extremely supportive response to the Parents Association's Voluntary '**Smart Phone Free**' survey.

The survey was sent to all parents in the schools in February this year and 532 responded. The survey results indicate that a strong majority of parents who participated are in agreement that the initiative should be implemented.

• *95% of those surveyed agreed with the introduction of the proposed voluntary 'Smart Phone Free' Code of Practice at St Brigid's Boys and Girls Schools in order to create a smart phone free primary school environment for all*

• *99% of those surveyed agreed that contact with your children during school hours could be done via the school phone*

• *94% of those surveyed agreed that contact with your children, while going to and from school, could be done with personal devices that have a phone call and text functionality with no Internet access or Apps*

• *93% of those surveyed agreed that children should not take Smartphones to activities outside of school grounds which involve pupils, such as after-school activities, playdates, or parties*

As a result, the Parents Association, with the support of the Boards of Management of both schools, are launching this initiative beginning with the school year 2020/21. In order for the initiative to be successful and have the most far reaching effect, we hope as many people as possible will support it and would request the following for the children:

Not to have a personal internet-enabled device such as Smartphone / Smart Watch that can send or receive texts, in their possession:

- a. During school hours*
- b. On the school grounds before or after school*
- c. On school trips*
- d. To take on school related playdates and parties*
- e. When attending after-school activities in a classroom, on the school grounds, or at an off-site location e.g. sports matches*

Notes:

1. In the event that a child needs access to a smart device for medical reasons, e.g.: monitoring a diabetic's sugar levels, this will not be impacted by the initiative
2. This is an entirely voluntary code; the more parents who opt-in and support the initiative, the more successful the policy will be in supporting parents who wish to protect their children from the premature use of social media and the pressure of having a smartphone
3. If you chose not to participate in this 'Smart Phone Free' Initiative please be aware that both St. Brigid's BNS and St. Brigid's GNS have strict policies with regard to pupils bringing smartphones and smartwatches onto the school premises which must be adhered to at all times

The Parents Association will continue to liaise with parents and the schools to promote initiatives such as technology talks, offering guidance and information and the promotion of fun, educational and safe internet usage. We welcome further ideas and discussion on this topic or any other issue that parents would like to raise in the interests of the boys and girls.

Thank you in advance for your continued support and encouragement of this initiative and please share this information with your child.

Yours sincerely

St Brigid's BNS and GNS Parents Association
September 2020