

Grange Post Primary School

Mobile Phones and Personal Smart Device Protocol

1. Ethos and Mission

Grange Post Primary School, under Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB), is a state, co-educational, multid denominational school underpinned by the core values of Excellence, Care, Equality, Community and Respect.

Grange Post Primary School is a partnership of staff, students and parents/guardians which seeks to enable each student to achieve their full potential. The school aims to inspire a love of learning and to support students in developing as caring and respectful individuals.

These values underpin this Protocol and our aim to provide a safe school environment which supports teaching, learning, wellbeing and positive relationships.

2. Introduction

Mobile phones and personal smart devices are part of everyday life and can be useful when used appropriately. However, their use during the school day can cause distraction, interfere with teaching and learning and reduce opportunities for students to interact with one another. They can also contribute to incidents involving cyberbullying, inappropriate communication, access to inappropriate content and the unauthorised taking or sharing of photographs, videos or recordings.

This Protocol has been developed having regard to Department of Education and Youth Circular 0045/2025, Restricting the use of and access to personal mobile phones by students during the school day.

The restriction applies throughout the school day, including break and lunchtime, except where permission or an exemption has been provided under this Protocol.

The school will operate different arrangements for different year groups. First, Second and Third Year students will use the ZEEKO pouch system. Transition Year, Fifth Year and Sixth Year students will continue to operate under the school's senior student mobile phone arrangements.

3. Documents Informing this Protocol

This Protocol has been developed having regard to the following key documents and school policies:

- Department of Education and Youth Circular 0045/2025 – Restricting the use of and access to personal mobile phones by students during the school day
- Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2024)
- Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027

- Grange Post Primary School Code of Behaviour
- Grange Post Primary School Acceptable Use Policy
- Grange Post Primary School Data Protection Policy

This Protocol should be read in conjunction with these documents, OTHER Grange Post Primary Policy documents and any relevant subsequent Department of Education and Youth guidance.

4. Mobile Phones and Smart Personal Devices

For the purpose of this Protocol, personal smart devices include mobile phones, smart watches, smart glasses, camera or AI-enabled glasses, earbuds or earphones, personal tablets and other personal devices capable of communication, internet access, recording or transmitting information. Where a student requires a smart device or assistive technology for an approved medical, educational or additional need, arrangements can be made under the exemptions section of this Protocol.

5. First, Second and Third Year Students

First, Second- and Third-Year students are required to use a ZEEKO pouch during the school day.

There is no requirement for a student to own or bring a mobile phone to school. Where a student chooses to bring a mobile phone to school, they must comply fully with the arrangements set out in this Protocol.

- On entering the school campus, students must turn off their mobile phone and secure it in their ZEEKO pouch. The phone must remain in the pouch until the end of the school day unless a member of staff has given permission for it to be accessed.
- Checks may be carried out by Year Heads, teachers or school management during the school day.
- At the end of the school day, students may unlock their pouch using the unlocking devices provided by the school.
- Where a student is leaving school early with permission, their pouch may be unlocked as part of the normal sign-out procedure.
- If a student forgets their ZEEKO pouch, their phone must be switched off and handed into the school office for the day. It can be collected at home time. Repeated instances may require the purchase of a replacement pouch.
- A lost, damaged or malfunctioning pouch must be reported to the Year Head or school management. Until the pouch has been repaired or replaced, the student's phone must be handed in to the office during the school day.

- Students must not deliberately damage, interfere with or attempt to circumvent the ZEEKO locking system. Deliberate interference with a pouch will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.
- ZEEKO pouches may be inspected periodically to ensure that they remain functional and in good condition.
- Charging a device while it is inside a ZEEKO pouch is not permitted.

6. Transition Year, Fifth Year and Sixth Year Students

- Transition Year, Fifth Year and Sixth Year students are not required to use the ZEEKO pouch system.
- Mobile phones and personal smart devices must be switched off, kept out of sight and must not be used or accessed during the school day, including break and lunchtime, unless a teacher or appropriate member of staff has given permission.
- Use of a mobile phone, smart watch, earbuds, smart glasses or other personal device without permission will be dealt with under this Protocol and the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Where a student leaves a classroom during a lesson, including using the toilet, the teacher may require the student's mobile phone to be left on the teacher's desk or in another designated place until the student returns.

7. Use of Phones for Teaching and Learning

- A teacher may allow students to use a mobile phone or other personal device for a particular classroom activity.
- Students may only use the device for the purpose directed by the teacher and must follow the teacher's instructions and the school's Acceptable Use Policy.
- For First, Second and Third Year students, the ZEEKO pouch may be unlocked for this purpose. The phone must be switched off and secured in the pouch again when the activity is finished.
- Any other use of the phone while permission has been given for a classroom activity will be treated as a breach of this Policy.

8. Exemptions

- The school recognises that some students may need access to a mobile phone or personal smart device during the school day for medical, wellbeing, additional education or other specific needs.

- Examples may include medical monitoring, assistive technology, visual or hearing needs, speech and language needs or access to an approved application required to support a student's education.
- Applications will be considered individually, taking account of the needs of the student.
- Where an exemption is approved, the school will agree appropriate arrangements with the student and their parent/guardian. This may include an adapted ZEEKO pouch, access at particular times, use of a particular application or another suitable arrangement.
- Exemption only allows the student to use the device for the reason for which the exemption was granted. It does not allow general use of the phone during the school day.
- Approved arrangements may be reviewed where necessary.
- A parent/guardian may apply to the Principal or Deputy Principal for an exemption. Supporting information may be requested where necessary. **The school must be informed beforehand if there is a specific medical need for a student to require their mobile phone.**

9. Smart Glasses and Recording Devices

- Smart glasses, camera-enabled glasses, AI-enabled glasses and similar wearable technology are covered by this Protocol.
- Students must not wear or use these devices during the school day unless permission has been given by the school.
- This does not apply to ordinary prescription glasses. Where smart glasses or another connected device is required for a medical, educational or additional need, an exemption may be agreed.
- Students must not use any device to photograph, video, audio record or live-stream another student, member of staff or other person without permission.
- The unauthorised taking or sharing of photographs, video or recordings may also be dealt with under the school's Acceptable Use policy and Code of Behaviour.

10. Communication During the School Day

- Parents/guardians who need to contact a student during the school day should do so through the school office or the school's normal communication system.
- If a student needs to contact a parent/guardian urgently, the school will facilitate this.
- Students who are leaving school early must follow the normal school sign-out procedure.

11. School Trips and Excursions

- For First, Second and Third Year students, phones should normally remain secure in the ZEEKO pouch while travelling on a school trip or excursion.
- The teacher in charge may allow students to access their phones at appropriate times during the trip.
- There may also be occasions where access is necessary for safety reasons, changes to collection arrangements, emergencies or other practical reasons.
- Students must follow the directions of the teacher in charge regarding phone use during all school trips and activities.

12. After-School Activities

- The arrangements in this Protocol apply during the normal school day.
- Separate arrangements may apply to after-school study, sports, rehearsals, clubs and other activities outside normal school hours.
- Students attending these activities must follow the directions of the members of staff responsible for the activity.

13. Tests and Examinations

- During classroom tests and school assessments, students must follow the instructions of the supervising teacher. Phones may be required to be switched off and placed in a designated location for the duration of the test.
- Mobile phones, smart watches and other prohibited devices are not permitted in State examination centres in accordance with examination rules.

14. Inappropriate Use

Using a phone or personal smart device without permission is a breach of this Protocol.

Sending nuisance or inappropriate messages, cyberbullying, accessing or sharing inappropriate material, taking photographs or recordings without permission, live streaming or using social media during the school day may also constitute breaches of the school's Acceptable Use Policy, Bí Cineálta Policy and Code of Behaviour.

15. Confiscation and Breaches of the Protocol

- Where a student is seen using or accessing a mobile phone or personal smart device without permission, the device will be confiscated by the teacher
- Confiscated phones will be stored in a secure location. The phone may be retained until it is collected by a parent/guardian in the evening. Collection will be arranged through the school office.

- If students need to telephone home for any reason they can do so by going to the school office and calling from the school office.
- For First, Second and Third Year students, having a phone outside the ZEEKO pouch without permission is a breach of this Protocol.
- Bringing a second phone to school in order to avoid or circumvent the ZEEKO system or using another phone while a student's phone has been confiscated, will be considered a serious breach of school rules.

Sanctions for unauthorised use of Mobile Phone.

- First offence: In-school detention.
- Second offence: After-school detention.
- Third offence: Suspension, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Further or repeated breaches will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Repeated or serious breaches will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour and may result in further disciplinary action, up to and including suspension where appropriate.

16. Responsibility for Phones and Devices

- Students who bring mobile phones or other personal devices to school are responsible for looking after them.
- The school accepts no responsibility for devices which are lost, stolen or damaged while on school grounds.
- Students must not interfere with another student's phone, personal device or ZEEKO pouch.

17. Online Safety

- The restriction on mobile phone use is part of the school's wider approach to online safety, wellbeing and responsible use of technology.
- The school will continue to support students in developing the skills needed to use digital technology safely, responsibly and appropriately.