



# Sunridge Circle Primary

## Learner Cell Phone Policy

### 1. PREAMBLE

The ownership and usage of the cell or mobile phone, and the increasing sophistication of its derivatives in its various guises, makes it necessary for the usage of these devices to be ordered, controlled and monitored by, in and through schools. The purpose of this policy is to help preserve and foster a safe, non-disruptive educational environment for effective teaching and learning, to maintain and foster order and discipline, to deter students from actions detrimental to themselves, their peers or the general value systems espoused by the school, and to achieve these objectives consistent with the law.

### 2. LEGAL BASIS

- 2.1 There is as yet no credible South African legal precedent in respect of the issues addressed in this policy. In the light of case law elsewhere, however, the school has built its policy on the following premises:
- 2.2 Given the need for school safety and the protection and well-being of individual learners, the authority of the school to conduct searches is held to pre-empt an individual learner's right to privacy. Consequently, school officials are empowered to conduct searches of a pupil's property when there is reasonable suspicion that s/he may be in violation of a school rule, a policy or the law.
- 2.3 All school-related property is subject to search at any time. School-related property includes, but is not limited to, computers, cellphones and related or similar devices and items used during or in the support of education-related programmes or activities, and in respect of this policy is deemed to include also privately owned devices brought onto the school property or to any school, school sponsored or school related activity or function.

- 2.4 Before undertaking a search of any privately-owned device, however, the school official performing such search must have a reasonable suspicion that the learner has indulged in an action which violates the law, a school rule or policy.
- 2.5 'Reasonable suspicion' may be created by firsthand eyewitness observations or reports, information from a normally reliable informant and suspicious behaviour.

### **3. BRINGING CELLPHONES TO SCHOOL**

- 3.1 Within these parameters, pupils are allowed to bring cellphones to school on the understanding that:
  - 3.2 The use of a cellphone at school is a privilege that may be forfeited by any pupil not abiding by the school's Code of Conduct or the stipulations of this policy.
  - 3.3 Learners must hand in their cellphone to their register teacher each morning and collect it each afternoon.
  - 3.4 If however learners fail to adhere to the above, learners are personally and solely responsible for the security of their cellphones. Not the school, the staff nor the education department will assume any responsibility for theft, loss, or damage of a cellphone, or any unauthorized use of the cellphone.
  - 3.5 There will be no use of a cellphone in any manner whatsoever during class time or in classrooms.
  - 3.6 The use of a cellphone to capture, store or transmit unauthorized pictures, or undesirable, illegal or pornographic material is strictly prohibited on the school premises, during school-sponsored or educational activities or outings, or while travelling to and from school or school sponsored outing or activities.
  - 3.7 Use of cellphones before the beginning of the school day, or after *its conclusion is not allowed. It cannot* be controlled by the school, with the proviso that no provisions of the school's Codes of Conduct are broken, and no actions referred to in point 5 (sub-points 5.1 to 5.9 inclusive), nor 3.5, nor any other inappropriate actions, are undertaken consequent on the use or possession of a cellphone or similar device.

### **4. ACCEPTABLE USAGE**

- 4.1 The authorized and monitored use of handheld devices like cellphones, iPhones, BlackBerrys and iTouch in order to enhance classroom learning.
- 4.2 Parental contact with children before and after school hours.
- 4.3 Tracing of the whereabouts of family members and friends, lift-givers after school.
- 4.4 The rescheduling of lifts or extracurricular activities – for example, in the light of changed weather conditions, unforeseen delays or earlier than expected ending of activities.
- 4.5 Communication during an emergency situation, e.g. in order to reach the authorities or a medical provider.

**5. UNACCEPTABLE PRACTICES**

- 5.1 Disrupting academic time: e.g. by allowing the ringing of cellphones or the sending or receiving of text messages during class.
- 5.2 The theft, borrowing, using, breaking, damaging, defacing, hiding, removing or going into the memory or storage capacity of a cellphone belonging to someone else.
- 5.3 Sending hoax bomb or other threats so as to avoid or condense class time, or disrupt tests or exams.
- 5.4 The use of cellphones to gain an advantage or break or circumvent exam rules or procedures.
- 5.5 The spreading of rumours and misinformation.
- 5.6 Alerting miscreants to the presence/approach of the principal, a teacher or other disciplinary officer.
- 5.7 The use of a cellphone in the selling or distribution or procurement of drugs or other banned or illegal substances, the dissemination of threats, cyber-bullying or harassment, unwanted text messaging, or the arrangement or co-ordination of anti-social activities.
- 5.8 The taking, viewing or distribution of inappropriate photos, making video clips of fighting, capturing inappropriate sexual behaviour of learners or downloading inappropriate images from the internet.
- 5.9 The provoking of a teacher and then capture and circulate the resultant response.

**6. OWNERSHIP AND PRIVACY**

- 6.1 In order to manage the wellbeing and safety of all who are part of the school, and to maintain the integrity of school systems, the school reserves the right to check on usage and content (including by random monitoring) of any files, messages, pictures, images or similar which are created, received, stored, transferred to, viewed, read, sent from or received using a cellphone or other device present on school property, at a school or school-sponsored function or activity, or on the way to school or school sponsored activity, regardless of whether the device was actually used on school property, at a school function or not.
- 6.2 Access to the worldwide web, e-mail services, the Internet and school servers at this school are filtered and managed in-house. Communication via e-mail on the school system cannot therefore be regarded as private, and the same conditions apply to messages, data or images on any cellphone or similar device brought to, found at or used on or in close proximity to the school premises, at school, or during school or at a school or school sponsored function or activity.

- 6.3 It is a condition of the use of the permission granted in terms of this policy that the school has the right to investigate the e-mail or account and equipment, including cellphones and similar devices, and also social networking domains such as Facebook and Twitter, of any user who, in the opinion of the principal or his/her delegate, which opinion shall be based on reasonable suspicion and/or firsthand eye-witness reports, might be transgressing the rules or the spirit of this policy.
- 6.4 In the event of any part of this policy being transgressed by a pupil or other person using the equipment brought to school or a school or school sponsored activity or belonging to or in the possession of a pupil at school or a school or school-sponsored or school-approved activity, the following sanctions may be applied:
- 6.4.1 Any staff member who sees a learner using a cellphone in contradiction of the specifications of this code shall confiscate the device and hand it in at the designated place for safekeeping.
- 6.4.2 If it is suspected, based on reasonable grounds, first-hand, eyewitness reports or clear evidence that anyone is using a cellphone in contradiction of any of sections 5.3 to 5.9 and 3.5 of this code, those authorized to do so by the principal will be expected to intervene and inspect the contents of the device to determine whether it has been or is being used for a purpose which is contrary to school policy.
- 6.4.3 Should such evidence be found, it must be reported to the principal, who may take the matter further, either through an internal disciplinary process, or by reporting it to other authorities, including the School Governing Body, the school Counsellor, a social worker, the education department or the police.
- 6.4.4 A confiscated cellphone for *first time offenders* will be held for one week, and may only be retrieved by a parent. The school will contact the parent informing them of the confiscation so that parents can ensure the safety of the child without the cellphone.
- 6.4.5 A confiscated cellphone for *second time offenders* will be held by the school for a maximum period of one school term, and may only be retrieved by a parent. The school will contact the parent informing them of the confiscation so that parents can ensure the safety of the child without the cellphone.
- 6.5 When a cellphone is confiscated from a learner, the following information should be documented and filed:
- 6.5.1 Date of confiscation.
- 6.5.2 Time of confiscation.
- 6.5.3 Location of confiscation.
- 6.5.4 Name of the learner in possession of the phone/device at the time of confiscation.
- 6.5.5 Description of the device.
- 6.5.6 Reason for the confiscation.
- 6.5.7 Details of evidence of inappropriate content (if any).

**POLICY APPROVAL**

<b>DESIGNATION</b>		<b>DATE</b>
<b>PRINCIPAL</b>	<i>Law</i>	2024.06.04
<b>SGB CHAIR</b>	<i>[Signature]</i>	2024.06.04
<b>REVUE DATE</b>	2026.06.04	

