



COMHAIRLE IANAN IANES SIAR

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

CONSULTATION ON POLICY WITH REGARD TO THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES IN SCHOOLS

The possession and use of mobile phones by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Use of mobile phones (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of problems, including:

- (i) Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft;
- (ii) Mobile phones (and their cost and level of sophistication - or otherwise) can make pupils objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying;
- (iii) Even when apparently silent, the use of mobiles phones for texting purposes could be potentially undermining of classroom discipline; and
- (iv) Use of the newer phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.

The Comhairle is therefore proposing a policy which prohibits the unauthorised use by pupils of mobile phones while on school premises, grounds or off site activities eg school swimming.

DETAILS OF PROPOSALS

The draft policy on use of mobile phones is set out overleaf. You will wish to note that it is not regarded as realistic to have a policy which prohibits pupils from taking phones to school. Not only would it be impractical to forbid pupils' from carrying them when the latest phones are so slim that they could be hidden easily, but it is believed that a number of parents would be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child were not allowed to carry a phone at all and might therefore be unable to contact their parents in respect of any situation that might arise.

We would welcome your views on the attached draft policy. Comments should be sent to the Head of Educational Resources, Education Department, Council Offices, Sandwick Road, Stornoway, HS1 2BW by **Friday 17 September 2004**. Comments can also be e-mailed to mobileconsult@cne-siar.gov.uk by the same date.



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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DRAFT POLICY ON THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY PUPILS IN WESTERN ISLES SCHOOLS

1. Schools should discourage, and should advise all parents to discourage, pupils from bringing mobile phones to schools on the grounds that they are valuable and may be lost or stolen.
2. Where a pupil does bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must remain switched off during the school day and may not be used, for any purpose, on school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as school swimming or sports activities). The only exception to this would be in an emergency or with the express approval of a member of school staff. Head Teachers may, at their discretion, allow any member of staff to approve such requests or may nominate a specific person to consider such requests.
3. Where a school pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone, as above, for any purpose, the phone will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent, guardian or carer.
4. Schools will incorporate this policy in their school's behaviour policy or school rules and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of school rules.
5. Schools will include a statement of this policy in the School Information Handbook which is issued annually to parents.