



HOLY CROSS
MERCY
SCHOOL
K I L L A R N E Y

ICT Policy

Holy Cross Mercy School

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ICT Policy for Holy Cross Mercy School



Introduction

This Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy for Holy Cross Mercy School was formulated by the Principal and teaching staff. The plan has been ratified by the Board of Management.

Vision Statement

In the area of ICT we aim to empower young minds through the use of innovative technology, fostering digital literacy, and nurturing a future-ready generation of learners. We hope for each pupil to leave our school feeling comfortable and confident using computers and iPads. These learner experiences should be rooted in the curriculum, through the meaningful use of educational software and apps for a balanced mixture of both educational content consumption and content creation in the classroom. We further hope through staff CPD in the area of ICT to keep up to date with the latest cutting-edge technology, inspiring a culture of innovation, and empowering pupils and staff to thrive in a digital age.

Rationale for ICT at Holy Cross Mercy School

As outlined by the Dept. Of Education in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for Teachers, ICT offer teachers and learners educational tools and resources which extend their learning environment. When used to support the aims, principles and learning outcomes of the Primary School Curriculum, these technological tools have the potential to augment and transform classroom teaching, learning & assessment. This policy aims to provide a structured framework that guides the effective integration of technology into teaching, learning and assessment practices in our school.

Specific Aims for ICT use in the Primary School

include:

Integration of Technology: For technology to be integrated across all curriculum areas to enhance teaching and learning experiences for all pupils.

Promote Digital Literacy: For pupils to develop essential digital skills and competencies to navigate the digital landscape effectively.

Continual Professional Development: For ongoing professional development for staff to effectively embed technology in their teaching practices.

Ensure Cyber Safety: For promoting a safe and responsible use of technology, including teaching pupils about online safety and digital citizenship.

Ensure Equitable Access & Inclusion: To bridge the digital divide by ensuring equitable access to technology resources and opportunities for all pupils, regardless of background or abilities.

Enhance Learning Outcomes: Utilise technology as a tool to engage pupils, personalise learning experiences, and foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Support Differentiated Instruction: Enable staff to tailor instruction to meet diverse learning needs through the use of digital resources and tools.

Prepare for the Future: Empower staff and pupils to adapt to rapidly changing technological advancements and develop a mindset of lifelong learning and digital fluency.

Advantages of ICT:

Enhanced Learning Opportunities: ICT provides interactive and engaging tools that can help make learning more enjoyable and effective for students.

Improved Access to Information: Pupils can access a vast amount of information online, enabling them to conduct research and explore topics in depth. Every effort will be made to educate pupils on how to fact check this information and they will also be encouraged to use reputable search engines and navigate to the most trustworthy websites to verify “facts” online. Older pupils will also learn about copyright

material and our responsibility as digital citizens to reference sources of information on project work etc.

Personalised Learning: ICT allows for adaptive learning platforms and resources that can cater to individual learning styles and pace.

Developing Digital Skills: Exposure to ICT from an early age helps pupils develop essential digital literacy skills crucial for their future success.

Collaborative Learning: ICT tools facilitate collaboration among pupils, allowing them to work together on projects and share ideas seamlessly.

Increased Engagement: Interactive multimedia elements in ICT can capture pupils' attention and enhance their motivation to learn.

Preparation for the Future: Integrating ICT in primary school prepares pupils for a technology-driven world and future careers that require digital proficiency.

Efficient Assessment and Feedback: ICT tools enable teachers to assess pupils' progress more efficiently and provide timely feedback for improvement.

Promoting Creativity: ICT tools provide platforms for pupils to express their creativity through multimedia projects, digital art, and innovative solutions.

Global Connectivity: ICT allows pupils to connect with peers worldwide, fostering cultural understanding and expanding their perspectives beyond the classroom. It also builds upon the home-school links between pupils, their school and their families.

Disadvantages

Distraction: Excessive screen time may lead to distractions and impact pupils' focus on learning tasks.

Cybersecurity Risks: Exposure to online platforms can pose risks such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and data privacy concerns for pupils.

Technical Issues: Technical glitches, software malfunctions, and inadequate WiFi connection or IT support can disrupt teaching and learning activities using ICT tools.

Overreliance on Technology: Overemphasis on ICT may reduce opportunities for hands-on learning experiences and face-to-face interactions among pupils.

Maintenance Costs: Upgrading and maintaining ICT infrastructure can be extremely costly.

Teacher Training Needs: Staff may require training to effectively integrate ICT into their teaching practices, leading to professional development challenges in an already heavy workload.

Loss of Traditional Skills: Overreliance on spell checkers, calculators, and online resources may hinder the development of fundamental skills like spelling, mental maths, and handwriting.

Health Concerns: Prolonged screen time can contribute to issues such as eye strain, musculoskeletal problems in pupils and staff.

Ethical Dilemmas: Teaching digital citizenship and ethical use of technology becomes crucial to address issues like plagiarism, online etiquette, and information credibility.

How ICT can support and integrate with the Primary School Curriculum

Enhancing Learning Outcomes: ICT tools can support the delivery of the curriculum by providing interactive resources, multimedia content, and simulations that engage pupils and facilitate deeper understanding of concepts.

Differentiated Instruction: ICT allows teachers to cater to diverse learning styles and abilities by offering personalised learning paths, adaptive assessments, and supplementary materials to meet individual pupil needs. Some pupils may also benefit from the use of devices for Assistive Technology, ensuring they access the curriculum using any ICT resources they may need to do so.

Cross-Curricular Integration: ICT enables interdisciplinary learning experiences by connecting different subject areas through collaborative projects, research tasks, and multimedia presentations.

Promoting Digital Literacy: Integrating ICT in the curriculum helps develop pupils' digital literacy skills, including information literacy, online safety, critical thinking, and responsible use of technology.

Project-Based Learning: ICT supports project-based learning approaches where pupils can conduct research, create multimedia presentations, collaborate with peers, and showcase their learning outcomes.

Assessment and Feedback: Digital assessment tools streamline the assessment process, provide immediate feedback to pupils and their families, and generate data for teachers to monitor progress and tailor instruction accordingly.

Cultural Awareness: ICT can be used to explore diverse cultures, languages, and global perspectives, enriching pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and promoting inclusive education.

Creativity and Innovation: ICT tools offer opportunities for pupils to express creativity through digital storytelling, coding, multimedia projects, and problem-solving tasks that align with the curriculum objectives.

Real-World Connections: ICT connects classroom learning to real-world applications, industry practices, and current events, fostering a deeper appreciation for the relevance of curriculum content in pupils' lives.

Professional Development: Utilising ICT in teaching enhances teachers' digital fluency, pedagogical practices, and instructional strategies, supporting continuous professional development aligned with curriculum goals.

ICT experiences for pupils across all classes

The school has acquired a comprehensive library of computer software and iPad apps. The school also depends and relies on a wide array of freeware and shareware software as well as online drill, games, exercises and curricular supportive sites. The Seesaw app is used to build an online portfolio of the pupils' work and for assessment purposes also. It is very useful for maintaining links between home and school also.

The progression of skills as listed below are incremental in nature as each further subsequent 6

step depends on and enhances knowledge of previous steps.

Junior & Senior Infants

- Introduction to basic digital skills and tools on iPad and using educational apps and interactive learning games mapped to curricular learner experiences and outcomes. ●
- Exploration of digital devices such as tablets and smart TVs for interactive activities. ●
- Introduction to basic mouse, finger scroll, zoom, tap and keyboard skills through age-appropriate activities.
- Switch iPads/desktops on and off in the correct manner
- Names of computer and tablet parts: monitor, keyboard, mouse, processor, printer, screen, home button, lock key, volume buttons, camera, case.
- Use mouse and or finger scroll, swipe, tap & zoom functions correctly for locating, selecting and activating apps or programmes.
- Open and close apps on tablet devices and navigate to/from the Home screen independently.
- Use Maths/Phonics Education software and websites.
- Write/Draw on the IWB/ screen mirrored tablet screen using the pen.

1st & 2nd Class

- Revision of computer & iPad parts.
- Turning on and off iPads/computers in the correct manner
- Open and close files
- Use the space bar and return keys
- Use the shift key for capital letters when typing.
- Use Microsoft Word and/or Pages for word processing.
- Save a document in Microsoft Word and/or Pages.

- Develop computer/iPad skills further through engaging in carefully selected educational software apps.
- Launch a web browser, access and navigate to a given website for research purposes.

3rd & 4th Class

- Development of foundational digital literacy skills through activities like typing practice and internet safety lessons.
- Integration of educational software and online resources to support literacy, numeracy, and creative activities.
- Introduction to coding concepts through visual programming tools and basic robotics activities.
- Typing practice.
- Use the airdrop function on iPads for sharing work and/or collaboration on projects.
- Word processing – correcting mistakes, spellcheck etc.
- File open/save commands.
- Use appropriate educational software to reinforce class work.
- Competency using keyboard.
- Write Stories with mixed cases.
- Carry out Internet Research.
- Creation of Presentations in PowerPoint/Keynote.

5th & 6th Class

- Engaging in more advanced digital projects such as multimedia presentations, digital storytelling, and coding projects.
- Collaborating on online research projects, virtual tours, and interactive simulations to deepen understanding of curriculum topics.
- Utilising communication tools for collaborative projects and sharing of learning outcomes with peers.

- Further development of digital citizenship regarding internet safety awareness, education on digital footprint in line with our anti-cyber-bullying policy.
- Awareness of the distinction between reliable and unreliable information found on the internet and how to reference where information is found for projects etc.
- Put together a project using presentation software (Keynote/PowerPoint) with images and visual sound effects.
- Use internet search engines to obtain information
- Independently type and edit documents
- Take photographs using iPads
- Navigate educational websites
- Develop awareness of online environment safety

ICT for Learning Support and Special Education Needs

When planning for the integration of ICT at Holy Cross Mercy School, careful consideration will be given to the needs of children requiring learning support and those with Special Educational Needs. The child with Special Educational Needs or in need of learning support may experience more success with the curriculum when familiar equipment is combined with additional or differentiated resources. In this way, ICT may allow these children greater access to the curriculum than more traditional methods of teaching and learning.

Personalised Learning: ICT tools can be tailored to accommodate individual learning styles and preferences, allowing for personalised learning experiences that cater to specific needs.

Assistive Technology: Specialised software, apps, and devices can support pupils with difficulties in communication, reading, writing, organisation, and other areas to enhance their learning and independence.

Multisensory Learning: ICT provides multimedia resources that engage multiple senses, making learning more interactive and accessible for pupils with various learning challenges.

Sensory Integration: Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) applications can create immersive

sensory experiences that help students with sensory processing needs or ASD

Communication Support: Communication devices, speech-to-text software, and visual aids can assist nonverbal or minimally verbal students in expressing themselves and participating in classroom activities.

Skill Development: Educational games, interactive simulations, and online platforms can help students practice and improve academic skills, social skills and problem-solving abilities.

Data Tracking and Progress Monitoring: ICT tools enable teachers to collect and analyse data on pupils' progress, behavior, and engagement, facilitating targeted interventions and individualised support.

Collaboration and Communication: ICT facilitates communication between teachers, parents, therapists, and other support professionals involved in the pupil's education, fostering a collaborative approach to support the pupil holistically.

Accessibility Features: ICT platforms often include accessibility features such as text-to-speech, screen readers, closed captioning, and customisable settings to accommodate diverse learning needs and preferences.

Roles and Responsibilities for ICT

Access: Pupils and teachers have permanent access to ICT equipment and resources. The school has a secure network which is accessible wirelessly and wired in each classroom. The school network contains a vast amount of content for teachers in every subject area. Teachers share information via the school network and staff meetings.

Sustainability: It is our goal to establish an ICT infrastructure which is user friendly, and maintain a level of competence and confidence among the staff and pupils which will allow us to

embrace ICT as part of our every day teaching and learning. We hope to replace equipment as soon as it becomes obsolete as funding allows.

Health and Safety Aspects

Screen Time Management: Screen time is appropriately limited to prevent eye strain, fatigue, and potential health issues associated with excessive use of digital devices. Pupils should take a break from the computers/iPads at least once every 20 minutes, and should do some simple stretching exercises to relieve the muscles they have been using, for example, their hands, wrists, necks. Eye muscles should be refreshed by looking at distant objects as well as those close up. Pupils can be encouraged to make these exercises into their own personal computer 'work-out' routine. Posture is also very important and pupils are given a few simple guidelines. Their backs should be supported in an upright position in the chair and their bodies should face forwards, not twisted sideways. Pupils sharing a computer/iPad are encouraged to make sure that everyone in the group can see without straining.

Cybersecurity: Pupils are educated on safe internet practices, privacy protection, and cybersecurity measures to safeguard personal information and prevent online threats such as phishing scams and malware. Children in our school are taught from an early age that they do not give out any personal details like surnames, addresses, phone numbers etc. online.

Online Safety: Pupils are taught about digital citizenship, responsible online behaviour, and strategies for dealing with cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and online predators. i.e. The Stay Safe Programme & webwise.ie Internet Safety Lessons & Internet Safety Day. Note that pupils are not permitted to use school devices to communicate with others online via email, chat room or comments on Seesaw. Their managed devices are secured so that outside communication with the children is not possible during school. Children are only allowed access to the Internet in supervised situations. The PDST Broadband installation program is providing

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external centralised firewall. Currently children are not allowed to have their own e-mail accounts in the school and are not allowed to access their existing ones. In the event of unwanted material appearing on screen, it is deleted immediately and teachers have been asked to immediately inform the principal.

Fire Safety: Fire safety protocols are implemented, including proper placement of electrical

equipment, regular maintenance of devices, and clear evacuation procedures in case of emergencies. - See Health & Safety Statement.

Interactive Whiteboards, smart T.V.s laptops, iPads, - all plugs should be plugged out every afternoon by the teacher as soon as he/she is finished with the equipment. This is to avoid boards being damaged as a result of lightning/electrical fault etc.

Cable Management: Cables and cords are secured when in use to prevent tripping hazards, electrical accidents, and damage to equipment, ensuring a safe and tidy learning environment.

Software Safety: Software and antivirus programs are regularly updated to protect against security vulnerabilities, malware, and data breaches that may compromise sensitive information.

Training and Awareness: Training is provided for staff, pupils, and parents on health and safety best practices related to ICT use, staying updated on emerging risks and technologies.

Hardware and Software Audit and Inventory

Current Hardware Infrastructure

- All teachers have either a laptop or an iPad for school use.
- All SNA's have an iPad for school use.
- All Pupils in all classrooms have permanent access to a bank of shared iPads. - 6 per classroom and there is a sharing per corridor system in place when a full class set of iPads are needed at times. This is pre-arranged per corridor as needed among staff. Some areas of the school have a full class set rota arranged also.

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Each mainstream classroom is supplied with

- Either a teacher's laptop or iPad with Broadband and connects wirelessly to the school network.
- Interactive Whiteboard or Smart TV with mirroring (screen share) capabilities The Office is equipped with
- Two desktop PCs with Broadband and wired to the school Network

- A coloured printer/copier.

SET Teachers are equipped with an iPad or laptop which connects to the school network

The school has a bank of iPads for pupil use which all connect to the school network.

A number of charge and sync trolleys and two charge/sync presses are available for storage, charging and synchronisation of all iPads.

All school staff devices are password protected.

All pupil devices are managed via the Apple School Manager & Jamf systems.

Current Software Provision:

- Various online games and activities etc for use on iPads and IWB for example see

<https://sites.google.com/a/pdst.ie/curriculum-and-ict-primary/>

- Some of the educational apps, websites and software in regular use in our school include: Seesaw, Google slides, Google Docs, Google Drive, YouTube Kids, Writing Wizard, Freeform, Pages, Keynote, Numbers, iMovie, GarageBand, Clips, Notes, Endless 123, Fry Words, Reading Eggs, Jolly Phonics, Teach Your Monster To Read, Starfall, Photoprint LT, PicCollage, Maths Age 3-5, Maths Age 4-6, Number Pieces, Number Frames, Math Fight, TopMarks, Mathigon, Folens.ie, Gill Explore, Edco, CJ Fallon Online, Epic, Canva, Grow in Love, Bua Na Cainte, Aladdin, Twinkl, Kahoot, Mentimetre, Explain Everything, Prizmo, Hit the Button, Say Hi, Google Translate, Beebot, Scratch, Swift Playgrounds, Sphero Edu, Wordwall, PowerPoint, MS Word, Jolly Phonics Songs, Toy Theatre, Symbaloo, Jack Hartman Super Simple Songs, Singing Walrus, Go Noodle, Joe Wicks, Jolly Phonics Software, Padlet, Google, ABC Duolingo, Scoilnet, ActiveInspire, Stop Motion, Book Creator, Lego Spike, Octo Studio, Safari, Draw & Tell, Phonics Oz, Maths, Nesy, Times Tables Rockstars, Cúla Caint, IXL.com, Toontastic, Sock

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Puppets, Voice Memos, Dragon Reader, DK Findout Library, Flip a Clip, Prizmo Go, EAL English,

Teachers' Continual Professional Development in ICT

Professional Development Workshops: Staff attend workshops, seminars, and training sessions focused on ICT tools, platforms, and strategies to help teachers enhance their digital literacy and pedagogical practices. Some of these happen as part of staff meetings. Teachers also attend professional workshops in the Education Centre Tralee and the Apple RTC. Teachers also do summer courses in the area of ICT and are always encouraged to share new insights into teaching and learning approaches using ICT.

Online Courses and Webinars: Information is regularly circulated via email about access to online courses, webinars, and virtual conferences that cover a range of ICT topics, allowing teachers to upskill at their own pace and convenience.

Peer Learning Communities: We facilitate collaborative learning communities where teachers can share best practices, resources, and experiences related to ICT integration, fostering a culture of peer support and knowledge exchange. We are extremely lucky to have a wealth of knowledge and expertise within our own staff including a number of experienced ADEs, Apple Teachers, Seesaw Ambassadors, Seesaw Pioneers, Wriggle Connect Advisors and Oide Technology in Education tutors on the staff who share their ideas and expertise with others on the staff also.

ICT Support: There is a dedicated ICT coordinator to assist teachers in implementing technology effectively, troubleshooting issues, and exploring innovative teaching practices. We also have a Digital Learning Team representing all class levels, who meet to draft and implement our Digital Learning Framework for the school.

ICT Resource Hub: We have curated a digital resource hub with planning materials and resources to support teachers in incorporating ICT in their lesson planning and classroom activities. Namely the shared Google Drive folders and our school's extensive Seesaw Library.

Reflective Practice: We encourage teachers to reflect on their ICT integration efforts, experiment with new technologies, assess impact on student learning, and continuously refine their instructional strategies

through revising our Digital Learning Framework. 14

Incorporating ICT in Lesson Planning: We embed ICT tools, multimedia resources, and interactive activities into our planning to enhance engagement, differentiation, and assessment practices.

Feedback and Evaluation: We complete the SELFIE tool annually to receive constructive feedback, we also offer observation opportunities to further enhance teachers' ICT proficiency, identify areas for improvement, and celebrate successes in technology integration. We also conduct an ICT inventory annually to assess the needs of the school.

Stay Updated on Emerging Technologies: Staff are kept informed about the latest trends, tools, and developments in educational technology through newsletters, word of mouth and networking opportunities.

Technical Support and Maintenance

IT Support: We have established an IT support system where teachers and staff can report technical issues, request assistance, and receive timely resolutions to ICT-related problems.

Routine Maintenance: We schedule regular maintenance checks for hardware, software, networking equipment, and digital resources to prevent breakdowns, ensure optimal performance, and prolong the lifespan of ICT assets.

Hardware Troubleshooting: We have experienced personnel who, in some cases, can diagnose and troubleshoot hardware issues such as malfunctioning devices, connectivity problems, and equipment failures in a timely manner. If this first step does not solve the problem, then it is reported to the IT coordinator who tries to resolve it in the first instance and then may contact outside tech support providers where necessary.

Software Updates: We manage software updates, patches, and security enhancements to keep systems up to date, address vulnerabilities, and improve functionality.

Backup and Data Recovery: We implement backup solutions, have cloud storage options, and data recovery protocols to safeguard critical information, instructional resources, and student work in case of

system failures or data loss. NB - All staff devices are password protected.

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Network Security: Our network security, firewall settings, user access controls, and internet filtering to protect against cyber threats, unauthorized access are managed by the PDST Broadband Services provider, and ensure a safe online learning environment.

Inventory Management: The ICT coordinator maintains an inventory of ICT assets, licenses, warranties, and service agreements to track equipment usage, software subscriptions, and budget allocations for replacement or upgrades.

User Training and Support: We provide information regarding training sessions, quick user guides, and resources to help staff, families and pupils troubleshoot common technical issues, navigate digital tools, and make the most of ICT resources.

Feedback Mechanisms: Through the SELFIE tool and regular surveys we gather feedback from leaders, staff and pupils to identify areas for improvement, address recurring issues, and enhance the quality of technical support and maintenance services.

Personal Mobile Devices

In alignment with our Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policy, the use of personal mobile devices including but not limited to mobile phones, smart phones, tablets and smart watches is **prohibited** for pupils in our school. This applies while on the school premises or involved in school activities such as school tours, excursions, trips, or extracurricular activities.

Pupils should, therefore, not bring mobile phones and other personal devices to school or when engaging in school-related activities or excursions.

Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the School Secretary using the school landline phone **064 6631241**. In the event of an excursion, your child's teacher will have access to a list of contact numbers if it is necessary to make contact with a parent/guardian.

Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the School Office remains the first point of 16 contact and can ensure that your child is reached quickly and a message passed onto them.

Staff are permitted to use their phones for school-related business only or for emergencies. Staff should not use their phones for personal reasons during teacher-pupil contact time.

In the exceptional circumstance where a parent deems that their child bringing their phone to school is essential, the following will apply:

- Parents must apply to the School Office in writing requesting that their child be permitted to bring their mobile phone/device to school. The letter should be addressed to the Principal. This letter will be kept on file. (See Appendix A)
- In the event, permission is granted for a pupil to bring their phone to school, the

parent/guardian must ensure the phone is powered off before entering school grounds and must remain powered off throughout the school day. Mobile phones should be handed in to the class teacher at the start of the day and stored in a locked press/cabinet until the end of the school day.

- Upon dismissal pupils are not permitted to switch on their phones until they have left the school grounds.
- Further, Holy Cross Mercy School accepts no liability for lost/stolen/damaged personal mobile phones.

Note that there is a complete ban on smart watches in our school.

Sanctions

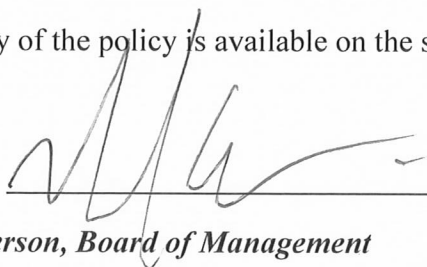
- Any pupil found to have a phone/personal device in school without the prior permissions required as above will have the phone/device confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent/guardian/carer collects it. Similarly, the use of all personal electronic devices is not permitted during the school day – this includes arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.
- Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other personal device for any purpose, it will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent/guardian/carer.
- If a pupil uses a mobile phone or personal device to take photographs, video footage or any recordings of other pupils or staff members, or shares inappropriate messages, this will be regarded as inappropriate behaviour, and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/personal device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the school in this regard is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí.

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Ratification and Communication

- This ICT policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 3/10/2024.
- A copy of the policy is available on the school website

Signed: _____



Date: _____

3/10/24

Chairperson, Board of Management



Holy Cross Mercy School

Personal Device Request Form

I wish to apply to Holy Cross Mercy School for permission for my child:(name) _____ to bring a mobile phone to school.

The reason I am seeking permission for my child to bring their mobile phone to school is: _____
_____.

Both my child and I have read and understand the terms of the AUP and ICT Policy. I understand that Holy Cross Mercy School will not be held responsible for any loss or damage to my device while on School property.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

If permission is granted, I undertake to power off and hand up my mobile phone to my teacher on the days that I need to bring it to school.

Pupil Signature: _____

Date: _____

I further note that if this permission is granted it will be valid for one school year or until further notice by the school.

For Office Use Only

Permission for : _____ in _____ Class to have a powered off mobile on the premises has been granted. Their teacher has been informed.

Signed: _____ Date: _____