

Regulations for the use of mobile devices at the European School Munich

- DRAFT: Steuergruppe des Erziehungsrat April 2021
- DISCUSSION: Elternvereinigung, Schülervertretung, SAC, Erziehungsrat
- APPROVAL: Management July 2021
- VERSION: 3.0 Juni 2021

Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Regulation.....	3
3. Information for parents.....	4
4. Information for pupils.....	4
5. Information for management.....	4
6. Information for educational advisors	5
7. Information for teachers	5

1. Introduction

Since digital competency is one of the 8 key competencies of our school system and we at the European School Munich focus on a holistic concept of media education in all grades, it is time to update the regulation on the use of mobile devices. It is intended to be a part of media education and to prepare students for a sustainable responsible and sensible use of the advantages but also the dangers of portable electronic devices in general and smartphones in particular.

The purpose of this document is merely to present a regulation. It should be noted that this regulation is embedded in a larger whole, which ranges from additional offers in the students' free time to media education to projects spread over many grades. However, these issues are not described in this document, as it would go beyond the scope of this document.

It is undisputed that the device does indeed have broad applications in the classroom and in leisure time. However, allowing young students in particular to use the devices freely carries risks that can range from gaming addiction to cyberbullying.

In addition, the need for a change arises from the fact that in recent years we have noticed increased and sometimes excessive gaming on mobile phones, especially among younger students, with the accompanying social isolation. This is no longer acceptable in this form, which is why many parents and the school are urgently calling for this regulation.

Another important component is the feasibility of such a scheme. It is essential that all sides work together to make this a success. A very large part of this falls to the students themselves, who must act on their own responsibility. But the parents are also called upon to pull together with the school to make the regulations, including their sanctions, work. Finally, the supervisors within the school play a major role and must ensure that the regulations are observed. In order to ensure that the regulations are supported by the broad majority, all stakeholders of the school family were involved through their representatives during the drafting process: The regulations were drafted and fixed by the steering group of the Educational Council. After discussions with the Parents' Association, the students' and staff representatives, the regulations were presented to the School Advisory Council and the Educational Council.

Every regulation also needs its controls and sanctions. The controls can be carried out in advance in the parents' home as well as during the lessons, but especially during the breaks. The sanctions are communicated very clearly and are based on an escalation pyramid, where the consequences are minimal for the first offense and more severe for subsequent offenses.

The following is a transparent explanation of the rules and sanctions, followed by information for the stakeholders who are responsible for making this arrangement work.

2. Regulation

The rules apply throughout the school grounds during school hours regardless of time or place. They are graded according to age groups:

2.1. S1-S3

In grades S1 - S3, a reasonable and unaccompanied use of the mobile device is considered too risky and dangerous. Therefore, only **accompanied use of the mobile device is allowed**. Therefore, if a supervisor or teacher does not specifically allow use, the cell phone or mobile device is to be kept silent or turned off.

Permission may be granted for pedagogical and didactic reasons during lessons or at the justified request of students in the event that they urgently need to write a message to their parents, for example.

2.2. S4-S7

In grades S4 – S7, an unaccompanied mobile device use is considered reasonable. Thus, the **use of a mobile device is allowed**, which goes hand in hand with the BYOD regulation for the higher grades. It should be noted that starting from these grades, WiFi access is provided by the school in the school network.

That permission explicitly does **not apply to activities that produce noise (such as playing music or videos) and playing computer games**. If such activities are detected by the supervisors, the same sanctions apply as in S1 – S3.

2.3. Sanctions

The escalation pyramid has the following stages, the third of which will be decided in respect of the individual case.

1st Offense: The device will be confiscated for that school day and the student's name will be registered in a list. This offense has no other consequences and can be understood as an urgent warning to actually abide by the rules.

2nd Offense: The device will be confiscated again for that school day, another entry will be made on the list, and parents will be notified by educational advisors that the child has violated school rules twice.

3rd Offense: the device will be confiscated again for that school day and a decision will be made by the educational advisors which consequence is now appropriate. Consequences after the third violation may be the following or similar:

- Detention with reflection on media consumption
- Exchange of the student card to a "red" student card

3. Information for parents

The school relies heavily on parents to ensure the success of this project. A great deal of prevention and education work can be done at home, depending on the age of the student. This is one of the central points for the school, that the children know that home and school are pulling together for the good of the children.

What preparation the parents need to make with their children to make this project succeed is best known to the parents. The following preparatory and accompanying measures could be applied:

- Prevention and education work about the dangers and the usefulness of restrictions on media consumption.
- Joint review of the children's cell phones with special attention to the number and content of games on the device.
- Restricting the possibilities of use or mobile data. Pupils from S1 to S3 are not given access to WiFi at school.
- Giving them a "classic cell phone" that allows messaging and telephony but has no other "smart" features.
- Activating "children's modes" on the device that only allow certain applications at certain times.

If it is absolutely necessary on the part of the parents to reach the child during school hours, the responsible educational advisors are available for this purpose.

4. Information for pupils

It may be necessary for students from S1 to S3 to use the mobile device. The reasons for this could be certain applications needed in class or important communication, for example, about an earlier arrival home. In all these cases, the students can ask the supervisor or teacher for permission to use the device for a short period of time under their supervision.

From S1 to S3, the use of digital media is also planned for the lessons. On the one hand, a smartphone can of course be used for this during lessons, but ideally another solution provided by the school.

Since the supervisors are not always able to immediately recognize the grade level in individual cases, the students of S4 and S5 will receive a "sticker" from their educational advisors that enables them to use the device when attached to the case of their mobile phones. This sticker should then ideally be attached to the cell phone case and shown in the event of an inspection. This is no longer necessary for the S6 and S7.

If a supervisor discovers a violation, the affected students must come immediately, turn off their device, and then return it to a designated location where they can pick it up at the end of the school day.

5. Information for management

For the organizational planning and implementation it is necessary that the following things are organized:

- An awareness of the regulation among teachers and educational consultants.
- A dedicated "cell phone supervisor" to monitor implementation, especially at the implementation.
- Assigning dual supervisors to "hotspots" such as the aula.
- Own initiative to control these rules similar to the teachers.
- Permanently dedicate a room such as the "Aulabüro" so that students can be brought there with their devices at any time in the case of a violation and the devices can be retrieved at the end of the school day.

It is also important to create incentives for students to spend their time with their friends or playing games. There should be enough equipment like table tennis, balls or boardgames available.

It is also essential to continue ongoing prevention programmes with regard to digital literacy. This also goes hand in hand with the implementation of the 8 key competences.

6. Information for educational advisors

Without the help of the educational advisors, this regulation is not feasible, as they will play a central role in certain steps and control. Media education is generally a part of education and ensuring compliance with school rules is part of the tasks. In case of necessary disciplinary measures, the school community depends on the work of the educational advisors and in the control of the rules they can make a very valuable contribution. The more consistently a rule is enforced, the more efficiently it functions.

They are responsible for:

- Handing out stickers to distinguish S4 and S5 pupils from S1 – S3 pupils.
- Notify parents in the event of a repeat violation.
- Disciplinary action in the event of a third violation.
- Carry out checks and admonishments on the school site.

7. Information for teachers

The teachers are responsible for the majority of the controls. It is necessary that everyone helps here. As soon as there are teachers who do not consistently point out the rules, this regulation and its compliance might fail. Since the teachers are not necessarily in a position to accompany the students to hand in the device in the event of a violation, especially between two lessons, there will be the following pragmatic solution:

- There will be supervisors whose sole purpose is to control cell phone regulation in the school site.
- In a supervision where two teachers are present, such as in the aula, one teacher may escort the child to drop-off in the event of a violation.
- If a violation is discovered in the hallways or outside the classrooms, the teacher should, if possible, escort the appropriate child to drop off the device and for registering the name.
- If it is not possible to accompany the child to the drop-off due to time constraints, the child should at least be accompanied to the office of the nearest educational advisor, who will take over the drop-off, or the name will be recorded and forwarded to the responsible educational advisor.

As already mentioned, this rule can only succeed if the teachers permanently insist on compliance. A short, somewhat more exhausting introductory period with a lot of consistency and commitment can very quickly establish the rule in such a way that violations practically no longer occur. It is the responsibility of a teacher in a modern school to also educate in the area of media.