ST. FLANNAN'S COLLEGE

COLÁISTE FHLANNÁIN

POLICY

Restrictions on Mobile Phones and Personal Electronic Devices Policy

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT	NEXT REVIEW
25 February 2026	2027

1 Introduction:

The Board of Management of St. Flannan's College recognises and acknowledges the positive aspects of students' use of mobile phones and other electronic recording/ communication devices.

Technology is ever evolving and increasingly part of everyday life. However, excessive mobile phone use, and screentime generally, can have a detrimental impact on students' concentration and academic performance. Ensuring that students are not using their mobile phone for personal use during the school day can help to address these issues and foster an environment more conducive to learning, as well as supporting in-person engagement with their peers.

This policy to restrict the use of phones by students during the school day, outside of limited exceptions, will enable us to provide a phone-free environment, to support students' wellbeing, concentration, academic performance, and development. It will provide a space for our students to disconnect from their online world and can assist in supporting them to become less dependent on their mobile phones.

There are also potential dangers for the school community stemming from the misuse and abuse of electronic media. As a result, the school will rigorously endeavour to protect the personal dignity and right to privacy of all the members of the school community.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Policy, the Code of Behaviour, the Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy, Internet Acceptable Usage Policy, Data Protection Policy, and other related school policies.

2 Rationale:

In formulating this Restrictions on Mobile Phones and Personal Electronic Devices Policy the Board of Management of St. Flannan's College aims:

i. to provide students with reasonable communication facilities appropriate to a modern school environment.

ii. to provide students with an environment free from distractions and conducive to effective learning and teaching.

iii. to secure an environment within our school where all members of the school community are protected from abuse/misuse of mobile phones, smart devices, text messages etc.

iv. to foster greater social interaction and communication between students.

The Board of Management of St. Flannan's College recognises that all members of the school community have the right to come to our school free from bullying in any form and acknowledges that societal changes have resulted in mobile phones becoming a routine and convenient means of communication between student and home.

To assist the school in implementing this policy, parents/guardians should not contact their daughters/sons by mobile phone at any time during the school day. Contact with the school should be made through the office.

Students who need to phone home during the school day should firstly speak with their Year Head/ Deputy Principal who will facilitate contact with home.

3 Mobile Phones and Learning

Mobile phones have become a powerful source of communication and learning. While restrictions to their use must apply in a variety of circumstances, we recognise that mobile phones can enhance learning and can be used to powerful positive effect.

Teachers may allow the appropriate use of mobile phones in pursuit of learning, in classrooms and other learning settings within the school or during any school-related activity.

4 Scope of Policy

i. St. Flannan's College has introduced restrictions on the use of student phones on our school campus.

ii. Before entering the school campus (i.e. once inside the school gate) all student phones must be powered off and placed in pouches. **Students may bring one mobile phone only onto the school campus.**

iii. The pouches must be locked for the duration of the school day.

iv. Students may only unlock their pouches on the school campus during the school day if directed to do so by a teacher for a specific reason.

v. The pouches may be kept on the student or in students' schoolbags or lockers. Students bring mobile phones to school at their own risk and are responsible for their care at all times.

vi. Students leaving the campus (at lunchtime or at end of the school day) may unlock their pouches at designated magnetic unlocking stations (bases). Bases will be placed down each path from the school close to each exit point.

vii. Students leaving the school early may unlock their phone pouches after signing out, in accordance with the usual signing out procedures.

viii. Accompanying teachers have the discretion to unlock phone pouches for students travelling on school busses for sporting/ school activities. This will be restricted to exceptional circumstances only.

ix. If students arrive to school with a phone but no pouch, they must report to a Deputy Principal's before 9 a.m. In such cases students must surrender their phones to reception for the duration of the school day.

5 Exemptions

Exemptions to this policy will only apply for medical, wellbeing, specific practical reasons, or reasons related to students' needs and will be flagged for staff on VSWare. These will only be granted when an identified and agreed need exists and will be considered on a case-by-case basis in line with the Department of Education guidelines and sanctioned by senior management in St. Flannan's College.

In such circumstances, students requiring phones will be allowed to have their phones switched on and kept in an unlocked pouch with a Velcro opening for easy access.

6 Misuse of Mobile Phones:

i. Any use of mobile phones/electronic devices on the school campus without the express permission from class teachers will incur the relevant sanctions.

ii. An incident where mobile phones are used to bully or harass a member of the school community is a serious breach of the school Discipline Code and will be dealt with accordingly.

iii. In such cases the phone will be confiscated at the Principal's discretion. It should be noted that it is an offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person (this includes creating/ taking photos, sharing photo/video content or uploadings on any form of social media). As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardai/ and or Tusla - Child and Family Agency in such incidents. The Principal may invoke the school's Code of Behaviour and sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion may be imposed.

iv. No photographs or recordings either video or audio may be made on the phone on the school premises without the school's permission. Using the phone in such a way can seriously infringe on people's privacy and rights. The school reserves the right to view the contents of the confiscated mobile phone, in the presence of the student, to ensure that it contains no images or information which might compromise any member of the school community. Any photographs or recordings taken in the school building, on school grounds or during any school activity, in or outside the school may be removed before the phone is returned.

v. The sharing of explicit images is totally prohibited. In accordance with the Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 and Coco's Law 2020, all cases involving the creation, distribution, or possession of explicit images of children (i.e. children under the age of seventeen) are potentially criminal and will be reported to the Gardai.

7 Sanctions for Misuse of Mobile Phones

7.1 First offence:

- The student's phone will be confiscated and left in a designated secure area in the school office.
- A detention will be issued, and the student may collect the phone from the school office at the end of the school day.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed that the phone was confiscated, a detention issued and that a second or subsequent confiscation will incur a suspension.

7.2 Second and Subsequent Offences:

Second offence

- The student's phone will be confiscated and left in school office until the end of the school day.
- A **one-day** suspension will ensue.

Subsequent offences:

- The student's phone will be confiscated and left in school office until the end of the school day.
- A **two-day** suspension will ensue.

7.3 Any student who refuses to surrender a phone found in his/her possession, which is not in the locked pouch, will be considered to have committed a serious breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and will incur an automatic additional one-day suspension.

7.4 The school accepts no responsibility for damage to or loss of the confiscated phone.

8 Lost or damaged Phone Pouches

i. All students will be given a lockable phone pouch free of charge.

ii. Students are responsible for maintaining and correctly using the phone pouches. The pouches should be marked with the student's name, but no other personalisation details are permitted (i.e. no use of Tippex/ graffiti).

iii. Any loss or damage to a pouch that renders it unusable will require the student to purchase a replacement immediately. The cost of the replacement pouch is €20.

iv. The pouch remains the property of the school and must be returned at the end of the student's time at St. Flannan's College.

The management and staff of St. Flannan's College are appreciative of the students' and Parents'/Guardians' ongoing support of our efforts to maintain and foster the positive use of technology in a caring and safe learning environment.

9 Approval and Review of the policy

This policy was approved by the Board of Management on February 25, 2026.

This policy will be reviewed in 2027

Signed: *Mr. Leonard Cleary*
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
Date: 25/02/2026

Signed: *Mr. Donal Cahir*
PRINCIPAL
Date: 25/02/2026