

FRANCISCAN COLLEGE GORMANSTON

Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy

2024 / 2026

1. Introduction:

The aim of this policy is to, firstly, protect the welfare, well-being, and safety of all within our school community and, secondly, to provide an environment that is conducive to excellent teaching and learning. Based on the Department of Education's Circulars 0045/2025, schools are required to implement a policy to restrict the use of and access to personal mobile phones by students in all recognised schools for the duration of the school day. This policy is considered in line with the school's Bí Cineálta (Anti-Bullying) Policy.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following policies and legislation:

- Code of Behaviour
- Acceptable Internet Use Policy
- Education Act, 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000

Franciscan College Gormanston recognises that mobile phones and personal smart devices are now an integral part of young people's lives and that they can have considerable value when used appropriately. However, in a school setting, it has been our experience that mobile phones and personal smart devices can prevent effective teaching and learning from taking place and inhibit the social development of students. Additionally, instances of inappropriate photographing/videoing of members of the school community and inappropriate communications via social media apps can heighten anxiety and stress levels amongst our students and in some severe cases this can lead to incidents of bullying.

This policy applies to all students enrolled in Franciscan College Gormanston. It refers specifically to the use of personal mobile phones during the school day, including break and lunchtime.

Aim of this policy:

- Support student learning by minimising distraction.
- Protect student wellbeing by reducing screen time and opportunities for cyberbullying.
- Promote positive face-to-face social interactions.
- Ensure responsible and ethical use of digital devices.
- Encouraging respectful and ethical use of technology in our school community

2. Policy:

1. The 2025/2026 academic year, Franciscan College Gormanston will be a mobile phone/personal smart device free zone during the school day. This includes smart phones/watches, ear pods and personal tablets etc. The school's Code of Behaviour makes it very clear that, **"Mobile phones are not permitted to be used within the confines of the school building and grounds at all times of the school day including breaktime and lunchtime."**

USE OF MOBILE PHONES – GUIDELINES

Time / Context	Phone Use Policy
On Arrival to School.	Phones, ear pods and headphones must be switched off before entering the school building. These devices must not be visible to any staff member, if they can see it, it's not stored properly.
During class time.	Not permitted.
Between Classes / Breaks / Lunch/Toilets.	Not permitted.
Extra-curricular Activities/School Trips including overnight.	At the discretion of supervising staff.
I-Pads, tablets etc.	Only permitted in accordance with school ICT acceptable usage policy.
End of school day.	Mobile phones may only be turned on after leaving the school building.

Exemptions:

Exemptions may be granted for specific educational or medical reasons, including:

- Diabetes blood glucose monitors and/or insulin delivery mechanism.
- Blood pressure monitoring.
- Seizure conditions where monitoring via a mobile phone app is needed.
- Additional/special educational needs, for specific tasks relating to a student's visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech and language impairments.

Exemption requests must be made in writing with supporting documents and are reviewed by school management in consultation with relevant support teams.

Under certain conditions supervised phone use during specific class activities which are deemed essential by the class teacher will be permitted. The phone may only be used for the purpose instructed by the teacher.

2. **All communication during the school day between parents/guardians and the school must take place through our school office via the office phone (01- 8412203) or via email to adminsec@gormanstoncollege.ie**
3. Students who wish to sign out of school early will do so at the front office.
4. Students may not use their phone to pay for canteen items. They should present a bank card or pay with cash. Canteen staff have been advised that phones will not be permitted for use.
5. As per the state/school examinations rules, no mobile phones/personal smart devices are allowed in an examination centre.
6. It is the student's responsibility to maintain responsibility for their mobile and / or electronic devices. Gormanston College accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones and personal smart devices such as smart watches and ear pods.
7. If a student ignores this policy and uses / accesses their phone, without permission, during the school day, the mobile phone will be confiscated. It will be given to the Deputy Principal who will keep the phone securely in a locked safe. The Deputy Principal will request that a parent / guardian comes to collect the phone. **Confiscated phones can ONLY be collected by a parent / guardian after the school day ends. Should there be a re-occurrence of the above offence the school reserves the option to insist that a student hand over their phone to the school office each morning and collects the phone at the end of the school day for a specified time period.**

Refusal to hand over a phone requested by a staff member will result in the matter referred to senior management. Refusal to comply with the school's mobile phone policy is a very serious breach of school rules and may warrant disciplinary action up to and including suspension from school.

The appropriate sanction may be immediate suspension.

8. If a mobile phone has been confiscated due to a breach of the Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy, parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible, and the student will be afforded the opportunity to phone their parent/guardian prior to leaving school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour. Parents and guardians will be expected to take responsibility for the behaviour of their child both inside and outside the school. They will be encouraged to work in partnership with the school to assist the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour.

Students will be expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and will be made fully aware of the school policy, procedure, and expectations.

Consultation and Communication:

Consultation regarding the implementation took place during the commencement of the school year 2025 / 2026 with:

- The Student Council
- The Parents Association
- Teaching & Support Staff
- Board of Management

ACCEPTANCE OF OUR SCHOOL POLICY ON MOBILE PHONE AND SMART DEVICE USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

This section must be signed and may be returned to the school. **

**** Unless you object to this policy and the practical operation
of this policy it is assumed you agree to the terms as outlined**

I/We have read the Mobile Phone Policy.

I/we understand that by enrolling in this school I/We agree to the terms as outlined in this policy.

STUDENT NAME(s): _____ (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed:

Parent/Guardian: 1: _____

2: _____

Student: _____