



**St. Flannan's College,
Ennis,
Co. Clare.**

Mobile Devices Policy

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. However, there are 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 and ensure, in so far as practicable, that student's use of mobile phones does not compromise or disrupt teaching and learning.

2. Rationale:

In formulating this Mobile Phone/Electronic Equipment 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, camera phones, text messages, digital cameras 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 and students should use the office phone in emergencies.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Policy, the Code of Behaviour, the Anti-bullying Policy, the I.T and Internet Acceptable Usage Policy and other related school policies.

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.

4. Scope of Policy

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must be switched off during class times, unless otherwise directed by teachers. The phone may be used during breaks:

- 11.00 to 11.20 Monday to Friday
- 12.40 to 13.20 **or** 13.20 to 14.00 Monday to Friday

Parents should not contact their son/daughter directly, except at these times (Contact during class time should only be made via the school office).

Detention: For students attending detention, the phone should be switched off for the duration of detention, Fridays, 12.40 to 13.10 **or** 13.20 to 13.50.

5. Definitions:

Switched off does not mean 'Silent', 'Meeting' or any similar mode. The phone must be **POWERED OFF**.

6. Misuse of Mobile Phones:

- (i) Any use of mobile phones outside the designated times as stated in the scope of this policy will incur the appropriate 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 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 pupil, 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, 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:

- (i) Students found in contravention of these rules will have phones and SIM cards confiscated and parents/guardians will be informed of this.

(ii) A student should ensure that his/her phone is powered off and SIM card included before being surrendered to the teacher.

(iii) First Offence:

Student may collect the phone from the office at the end of the school day.

Parents/Guardians will be informed that the phone was confiscated and that a second or subsequent confiscation will incur a detention.

Second and Subsequent Offences:

A detention will be issued.

Parent/Guardian must collect the confiscated phone from the Principal.

(iv) A student who refuses to surrender a phone found in his/her possession, which is not turned off, will be considered to have committed a serious breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and will incur an automatic suspension.

(vi) The confiscated phone will be held in a designated secure area in the school office; however, the school accepts no responsibility for damage to or loss of the phone.

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

8. Approval and review of the policy

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Board of Management on October 23, 2024

The policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in 2026.

Signed: *Mr. Leonard Cleary*

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: *October 23, 2024*

Signed: *Fr. Ignatius Mc Cormack*

Principal

Date: *October 23, 2024*