



Smart Mobile Devices

(i.e. smart phone, watch etc) - Acceptable Use Policy

Introduction

As per Circular 0045/2025, High Cross College is required to implement a policy to restrict the use of & access to personal mobile phones by students for the duration of the school day, including during breaks and at lunchtime. This policy is intended to support our school in improving the learning environment in school by reducing distraction, reducing the risk of cyberbullying & access to inappropriate content during school hours & increasing traditional social interactions between students at school break times. This policy will enable our students to disconnect from their online world and connect more with their peers for the duration of the school day. The restriction on the use of phones does not apply to travel to and from school, during after school activities/study and limited exceptions, which will be managed in accordance with High Cross College's' discretionary procedures.

High Cross College will endeavour to play a vital role in promoting wellbeing and mental health by equipping our young people with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to deal with the challenges that may impact on their wellbeing. It is recognised that 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. The provision of a phone-free environment, will help support students' wellbeing, concentration, academic performance, and development. It will help to support our young people to become less dependent on their mobile phones.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all students within the school premises, during school hours, and at any school-related activities or events. This policy requires that each student must have their smart device i.e. personal mobile phone etc, turned off at all times and placed in a Lockerfix



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pouch unless an exemption in limited exceptional circumstances is expressly given by a member of staff. The school will use specific mechanisms to implement the restriction; for example: lockers & pouches etc. Consideration will be given to administration and practicality.

As the intention of the restriction is that it will apply throughout the school day, the policy will apply to extra-curricular activities that are organised during the school day but take place off school grounds. Any flexibility that may however be applied when there are school activities taking place off school grounds will only be considered to the extent that it is needed for purposes that may include safeguarding and other determined reasons, for example, to facilitate collection by parents/guardians where arrangements change, or a student must leave unexpectedly.

Activities taking place outside of school hours, but which are deemed to be school activities, for example, after-school study, rehearsals for school shows, may not be subject to this restriction.

In consultation with our school community, it may be agreed that some limitations can be applied as agreed. Consideration will also be given to whether the use by students of smart phones is required to support the provision of teaching and learning in general or to support students with specific additional needs.

Pupils are not permitted to have/wear smartwatches or equivalent smart devices during school hours, on the school premises or on school tours/outings and/or for any school related event.

Relevant School Policies

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the *Acceptable Usage Policy* (this details acceptable use of Internet enabled devices, and related devices in the school) & the *Bí Cineálta Policy* (this is the school's policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour, online bullying behaviour, homophobic & transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour & sexual harassment), *Data Protection Policy*, *Code of Behaviour*, *Child Protection Policies and procedures* & the *Wellbeing Policy*, to ensure the area of safe and ethical use of the internet is addressed in the context of the whole-school approach to wellbeing.



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Mechanisms to implement the policy

High Cross College will aim to apply a consistent approach to ensure a restriction is implemented for the duration of the school day. The predominant practical arrangement method chosen to implement the approach across the system will include locking storage pouches for mobile phones, provided to each student, typically unlocked via a magnetic mechanism, access to which is controlled by the school. At the discretion of staff, the locking storage pouches may be required to be placed in storage boxes in lockers, lockable boxes in classrooms or handed in to the school office on arrival to school.

Possible exemptions

In the case of possible exemptions in exceptionally limited circumstances, a medical consultants report is required to support an application for an exemption. Any exemption granted will only allow students to access their phones for the specific reason outlined in the application and it will be prohibited to use the phone for general use. Consideration of any exemption will be exercised by School Management on a case-by-case basis. A student with an exemption will be required to place their phone in a Medical pouch.

Webwise Supports and resources

Webwise is the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Centre, which provides free information, resources for schools, families and young people on online safety and digital citizenship. Webwise develops and disseminates free resources, information, advice, and tools to support and promote digital citizenship and address topics such as online wellbeing and cyberbullying. Its mission is to make the Internet a better place for young people under the coordination of the Department of Justice.



HIGH CROSS COLLEGE

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



Standard Pouch



RED OOPS Pouch & BLUE MEDICAL Pouch

The Standard Pouch is easy to use, has secure locking, signal blocking & durable design. The students full name should be applied in block letters,

The Red Pouch is issued to any student who has forgotten their Phonelocker pouch.

The Velcro Medical Pouch is intended for use by students with additional needs and/or

Page 4 of 8

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office@highcrosscollege.ie

South Campus:
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office2@highcrosscollege.ie

medical circumstances. It is non signal blocking & has a velcro opening.



Unlocking Devices

LockerFix Pouch Operation Instructions for Students

- **Step 1:** Place the switched off mobile device inside the pouch with no protrusions.
- **Step 2:** Lock the pouch by pressing the two black buttons together.
- **Step 3:** Open by tapping the smaller black button on front of the pouch against the magnet.

The most efficient method to unlock the pouch at the end of the school day is the fixed point secure unlocking stations. A member of school staff will use a master key to unlock these stations prior to the final school bell. Students are then free to unlock their pouches themselves upon departure.

Acceptable Usage of Smart Phone & Devices on School Premises

The Phonerlocker pouches ensure that student's phones are securely stored and remain inaccessible throughout the school day. Students are not permitted to use their phones for any unauthorised personal use purpose while on the premises (i.e. to include school grounds) or while participating in school related activities (e.g., Study, Extra- Curricular Activities, Inter-school games & Day Trips).



Upon arrival, all phones must be securely placed into the individual's assigned Phonelocker pouch and remain locked for the duration of the school day. At the start of first class, the phone pouch must be left on the student desk and the teacher will check if all pouches are secured.

Students may unlock and retrieve their phones only upon leaving the premises at a designated unlocking station.

Acceptable Usage of Smart Phone & Devices for Educational Purposes

The use of Smart phones/devices may be authorised in some instances in class with teacher approval for and with supervision of specific learning activities (e.g., research, use of educational apps). Students must follow the teacher's instructions carefully when smart phone/device use is allowed. Any unauthorized use during such class time will result in the phone/device being confiscated.

Using the hand held unlocking station, the teacher will supervise the unlocking and locking of the pouches. Personal smart phones and other internet enabled electronic devices must not be used to record, photograph, or video any individuals at any time on school premises.

Home - School Communication & Parental Cooperation

All student communication with parents/ guardians must be made through the school office e.g. a student, who wishes to go home for any reason during the school day, must arrange to do so through the school office and not independently by mobile phone.

North Campus: 093 24575 or via email at office@highcrosscollege.ie

South Campus: 093 24199 or via email at office2@highcrosscollege.ie

Responsibility cannot be taken by school authorities for students who arrange independently to go home without following proper procedure. Any such arrangement is a breach of our Code of Behaviour and will incur sanctions.

Parents/guardians should contact the school office if they need to reach their child during school hours. Thus, in order to assist the school in implementing this policy, parents/guardians should not arrange to contact students by smart phone/watch at any time during the school day.

We ask that parents and guardians support this policy by encouraging responsible mobile phone and other internet enabled electronic devices usage and that they ensure their child understands the rules and consequences.



Non-Compliance Procedure

If a student is found in possession of an unsecured smart phone/device (i.e. not in a PhoneLocker pouch, the following steps will be taken:

First Offence: The smart phone/device will be confiscated by a member of staff who will issue a Yellow Card. The device will be surrendered to School Management and a phone misuse infringement will be logged. The parent/guardian will be required to collect the device from the school office at the end of the school day or any school day thereafter at their own discretion. The cooperation of all school families with regard to this sanction is vital and appreciated.

Second Offense: The smart phone/device will be confiscated by a member of staff who will issue a Yellow Card. The device will be surrendered to School Management and a phone misuse infringement will be logged. The parent/guardian will be required to collect the device from the Principal/Deputy at the end of the school day. This second confiscation will result in a one day Suspension.

Subsequent offences: Repeated confiscations will result in a Yellow Card, an infringement log, a one day suspension and/or further actions at the discretion of the Principal.

Failure to Present a Phone Locker Pouch

If a student brings a phone to school without their PhoneLocker pouch they must report the issue to a member of staff immediately upon their arrival and surrender their phone. If available, they will then be issued with a 'Red Oops I Forgot My Phonelocker' pouch for the duration of the school day. If one is not available, they must surrender their phone for the day and are given a 'Red Oops I Forgot My Phonelocker' slip to confirm this. They may pick up their phone at the end of the school day from the office.

If a student brings a phone to school without their PhoneLocker pouch and fails to report the issue to a member of staff immediately upon their arrival, and they are found in possession of an unsecured phone/device, then the non-compliance procedures will apply.

Use of Handheld Unlocking Devices

Designated staff may use handheld unlocking devices when phones are required for staff activities, on off campus excursions or in case of emergency. Phones must be re-locked immediately after use under staff supervision.



Cyberbullying and Online Behaviour

Incidents where students use smart phones/digital devices to bully other students or send offensive messages or calls will be investigated under the school's Bi Cinealta (Anti-Bullying Policy).

Any use of phones or other electronic devices to engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate behaviour (e.g., sharing inappropriate content) will be treated as a serious violation of the school's Code of Conduct.

Such actions may lead to severe disciplinary measures, including suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity of the incident.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/digital device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve An Garda Siochana in such incidents.

Responsibility for Mobile Phones/Digital Devices

The school does not accept responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged mobile phones/smart devices.

Students are expected to take care of their assigned PhoneLocker pouch and bring it daily. Replacement pouches may be available from the school office or purchased directly from Lockerfix.

Students and their parents/guardians are wholly responsible for the safe keeping and security of their devices, and the school recommends leaving expensive devices at home.

Each student is responsible for all communication from their phone and any image or recording on their mobile phone. The taking of photographs or the use of any recording equipment is strictly forbidden and a range of sanctions, up to and including expulsion, will apply.

Ratified by the Board of Management on June 8th 2026.