

Cross & Passion College

Mobile Phone Policy September 2025

Restricting the use of and access to mobile phones by students during
the school day – Circular 0045/2025



Mission Statement

We, the community of Cross and Passion, acknowledge the central importance of caring relationships with each other, in the creation of a safe learning environment where all are encouraged to grow, with dignity, to their full potential.

The energy and spirit of our school community are reflected in our values.

We believe that in caring relationships our students:

- ✓ learn to respect self and others
- ✓ learn to appreciate and develop their talents
- ✓ learn to value their contribution to the creation of a positive and productive learning environment
- ✓ deepen their understanding of themselves and others as learners
- ✓ learn the true meaning of inclusive community by accepting their differences and acknowledging their mutual interdependence
- ✓ develop awareness of and responsibility for the earth
- ✓ grow in awareness of Gospel values as they develop into young adults.

DOMINE NOVERIM TE!

1. Rationale

Cross and Passion College recognises that mobile phones are an integral part of young people's culture and way of life, and can have considerable benefits and value when used appropriately. However, we are also cognisant that phones can be a huge distraction, can hinder communication and socialisation and can contribute to high levels of anxiety and stress among young people, and adults alike.

The purpose of this policy is to promote teaching, learning, and student wellbeing by:

- improving the learning environment by reducing distraction
- reducing the risk of cyberbullying and access to inappropriate content during school hours
- increasing traditional social interactions between students at school break times.

Circular 0045/2025 requires schools to formalise and implement a policy to restrict the use of personal mobile phones by students during the school day, including during breaks and at lunchtime. This policy will build on the existing school policies in this area and will enable children and young people 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.

The Department of Education and Youth (DEY) state the following:

- Schools play a vital role in promoting wellbeing and mental health by equipping children and 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 policy to restrict the use of phones by students during the school day, outside of limited exceptions, will enable schools to provide a phone-free environment, to support students' wellbeing, concentration, academic performance, and development. It will provide a space for children and young people to disconnect from their online world and can assist in supporting them to become less dependent on their mobile phones.
- Research including the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report "Technology in Education a tool on whose terms", and the Norwegian Screen Use Committee Report on the impact of the use of mobile phones during the school day on wellbeing and academic performance, will continue to inform department policy and resources in this area.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies including:

- Code of Behaviour

- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement

In accordance with Circular 0045/2025, the method chosen to restrict students' access to and use of personal mobile phones is locking storage pouches for mobile phones (Yondr) unlocked via a magnetic mechanism, access to which is controlled by the school.

2. Consultation with the school community

In line with the guidance provided in circular 0045/2025 the school is committed to engaging in consultation during the implementation of this policy by using mechanisms which may include:

- information sessions with students, parents/guardians and school staff
- discussion with the student council or other similar mechanisms established in the school
- engagement with the parents' association
- workshops and/or focus groups
- questionnaires and surveys
- usual staff meetings between teaching staff, non-teaching staff and school leaders
- use of specific school committees such as the school's student support team or equivalent.

3. Scope

- This policy applies to all students enrolled in **Cross and Passion College** during the full school day, including break, lunchtime and evening study.
- It applies to all personal mobile devices, including smartphones, smartwatches, and airpods/earphones (wearable tech).

4. Objectives

- To ensure a focused, safe, and respectful learning environment.
- To protect students from the negative impacts of excessive phone use, including distraction, social isolation, and cyberbullying.
- To promote healthy social interaction during the school day.
- To comply with Department of Education and Youth requirements.

5. Implementation – Yondr Pouch System

1. Distribution

- Each student will be assigned a personal **Yondr Pouch** with identifier, provided by the school.
- It is each student's responsibility to bring their Pouch with them to school every day and keep it in good working condition.

2. Morning Procedure

As students arrive to school they must:

- Only bring one phone to school (or none)
- Turn their phone off.
- Open their Yondr Pouch by tapping against the Unlocking Base.
- Place their phone (and any other devices covered by this policy) inside the Pouch and secure it.
- Store it in their schoolbag/pocket for the day.

If a student chooses not to bring a Mobile Phone to school this must be confirmed in writing by a parent/guardian to the principal.

3. During the Day

- Students keep their locked pouch with them at all times.
- Pouches must not be tampered with, forced open, or damaged.

4. End of Day

Before leaving school grounds, students will:

- Open their Pouch at an unlocking station.
- Remove their phone
- Close their Pouch (Important to stop the pin bending in the bag)
- Keep in their school bag overnight.

5. Late Starters or Early Leavers

Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/unpouch their phones at Reception.

6. Exemptions

Exemptions will only apply for medical, wellbeing or specific practical reasons, or for reasons related to students' special educational needs. The exemptions will allow students to access their phones for the specific reason outlined in the exemption, and not for general use.

The examples below are not exhaustive and consideration will be needed on a case-by-case basis.

Examples of some of the possible issues where exemptions are justified may include but are not limited to:

- Diabetes blood glucose monitor and/or insulin delivery mechanism.
- Blood pressure monitoring.
- Seizure conditions where monitoring via a mobile phone app is needed.
- Mental health conditions, where communication with parents/guardians on an unrestricted basis is needed.
- Additional/special educational needs, for specific tasks relating to a student's visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech and language impairments.

- Access by an English as an Additional Language (EAL) student to specific applications to support language.

An application must be made to the principal in writing outlining the full reasons why the exemption is required and supported by medical certification or evidence specifically stating that access to a mobile phone is essential. Applications of a general nature from a parent/guardian or student without supporting evidence will not be considered.

Where an exemption is granted, the student will be provided with a different pouch which will allow access for the specified need. The general understanding of circular 0045/2025 will still apply in that the student will be expected to be restricted in their use of and access to the mobile phone for the school day, other than for the specific purpose at the essential times. Where a student granted an exemption abuses that privilege then the exemption may be withdrawn.

5. Expectations & Responsibilities

- **Students** must comply with the policy and care for their assigned pouch.
- **Parents/Guardians** are asked to support the school by reinforcing the importance of the policy at home.
- **Teachers and staff** will monitor compliance and report breaches as per this policy and the school's Code of Behaviour.
- **School leadership** will oversee implementation, staff training, and review of the system.

6. Consequences for Breach

Pouches will be checked to make sure they have not been damaged and that they are securely closed with student's phone inside.

- **Phone seen during School**

If a student is found in possession of a phone outside a Yondr pouch, the phone will be confiscated and must be collected by a parent/guardian (Parent Pickup). The parent/guardian will be contacted and expected to collect the phone before 5pm. If the phone cannot be collected by this time it can be collected the following day by the parent/guardian. Phones will not be returned to students.

A student in breach for a second time will, in addition to the above, be issued with a detention.

Repeated breaches will result in suspension.

Students who bring in more than one phone are liable to be suspended.

Students who say they have not brought a phone to school, and are subsequently found to have one, are liable to be suspended.

- **Forgotten Pouch**

If a student forgets their Pouch, **they must hand their phone into reception at the start of the day**. The phone will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.

If a student consistently forgets their Pouch, it is considered Lost. Refer to the Lost Pouch policy below.

- **Tampering with / damaging a pouch or lost pouch:** If a student damages or loses their Pouch, we will collect the phone and call home for a **Parent Pickup**. A fee to replace the Pouch of €20 will be applied. Examples of damage include:
 - Ripped fabric
 - Cut
 - Torn
 - Bent/cut pin
 - Signs of force to black button on flap
 - Damage to the black ball
 - Pouch opens without unlocking station

A student who purposely interferes with or damages their Yondr pouch or the Yondr pouch of any other student is also liable to a serious sanction, up to and including suspension.

Students must return the Yondr Pouch they were assigned at the end of the school year.

- **Unlocking Stations**

If a student is found in possession of a Yondr unlocking station, or a similar strength magnet used to unlock the pouches, this will be considered a serious offence, and will lead to a suspension.

- **Accidental Damage**

Notify the school immediately explaining what happened. If any damage is spotted at a pouch check it will be considered intentional unless the student has raised it previously.

7. Emergency Contact Procedures

- Parents/guardians needing to contact their child in emergency during the day should telephone the school office on 045-481524.
- Students who need to make an urgent call may request to use the office phone with staff permission.

8. Communication

- This policy will be published on the school website and circulated to all parents and guardians.

9. Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management, with input from students, parents, and staff.

Marie O'Neill

10/9/25

Marie O'Neill

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed:

Joe Leonard

Date:

10.09.25

Joe Leonard

Principal

