

## 2025-2026 St. Francis High School Cell Phone and Internet-Enabled Device Policy

New York State's Distraction-Free Schools Law provided us the opportunity to review and reflect on our current cell phone and personal technology policies at St. Francis High School. Using feedback from parents, students, teachers and staff, as well as observations of the effects on our school culture, we discussed some areas of concern and tried to meet our families in a place that best serves the entire school community.

To this end, we crafted a policy that eliminates cell phone and *personal*, internet-enabled device (smart watch, tablet, laptop, etc.) use from instructional periods, but permits use during some non-instructional periods. This updated policy is intended to create a more structured and engaging learning environment across all grade levels, free from distractions that cell phones and personal electronic devices can create, and still provide families the opportunity to check in with their sons.

### Authorized Use for Instructional Purposes

Internet-enabled technology use by students will be permitted throughout the school day using school-issued Chromebooks at the discretion of the faculty and staff. Students are expected to act responsibly and thoughtfully when using their school-issued devices, following the acceptable use policy in the *Student Handbook*. Instructional purposes include, but are not limited to:

- Research and inquiry
- College and career exploration
- Homework and collaborative projects
- Teacher-directed or staff-approved uses

Exceptions will be made for students with educational or health-related needs, as outlined in their IEP or 504 plan. Cases for medical exceptions should be reported to the nurse before the school year begins or as soon as any new medical condition arises during the school year.

### Non-Instructional Uses and Parent/Guardian Communication

A student may use his cell phone to communicate with family before and after school and during the two designated check in times throughout the instructional day. Students are permitted access to their cell phones during 1) the first 5 minutes of the daily Activity Period and 2) their lunch period in the SDR.

If a student needs to be contacted outside of these two designated check in times, parents/guardians are expected to call the main office. In the event of an emergency, parents/guardians will be transferred to the counseling center and assistance will be provided to the student as needed. In all other non-emergency situations, the main office will take a message for the student that will be given to the teacher and relayed to the student before the end of the class period.

### Privacy Zones

Administration expressly prohibits the use of cell phones and other internet-enabled electronic devices in areas where privacy is expected, including but not limited to:

- Restrooms
- Locker Rooms
- Health Office
- Counseling Center
- Chapel
- Any other designated privacy areas

Use of devices for unauthorized audio or video recording is strictly prohibited and may result in further disciplinary action being taken by the administration.

### Device Storage Requirements\*

- a) **During Class Time, Study Halls & Varsity Athletes in the Library:** All cell phones and other personal, internet-enabled devices must be silenced or powered off and placed in the designated wall-mounted holders upon entering the classroom (before instruction begins). Devices will remain in the holders for the entire class period, including when a student asks to use the restroom.
- b) **Hallway Transitions:** Students are to keep their phones and other personal, internet-enabled devices silenced and in their pocket or backpack during hallway transitions. There will be no cell phone usage during transition time.
- c) **Mass/Assembly:** Students will not be allowed to bring their cell phone or other personal, internet-enabled devices to Mass or assemblies, regardless of location. All devices will remain in the designated wall-mounted holders upon leaving the classroom, and teachers will lock classroom doors.

\*Air Buds and other types of head phones/listening devices should be stored at all times, unless otherwise permitted by a teacher or an administrator to be used for academic purposes in the classroom.

### Liability

St. Francis High School will not be liable for the loss, damage, misuse, or theft of any personal technology brought to school by students. The administration reserves the right to monitor, inspect, and/or confiscate personal technology when there is a reasonable suspicion that a violation of school policy or criminal law has occurred.

### Disciplinary Guidelines

Students who fail to comply with the device storage requirements or usage expectations will be subject to progressive disciplinary action as outlined in the student handbook. St. Francis High School administration will be enacting a three-strike policy for students who fail to comply with the personal device policy.

<b>Strike 1</b>	1 hour of school detention AND loss of cell phone privileges for the day
<b>Strike 2</b>	2 hours of school detention AND loss of cell phone privileges for the day
<b>Strike 3</b>	3-hour Saturday Detention
<b>*A student who violates the policy for a 4th time may lose his cell phone privileges for the remainder of the year.</b>	

Students who use their cell phones for the purpose of violating academic integrity, harassing or bullying St. Francis students or students from other schools, accessing or sharing pornographic images, or any unlawful behavior will be subject to a review by the Discipline Board and consequences more severe than the three-strike policy.

Michael A. Messoro, Principal

Timothy Monahan, Assistant Principal

Kyle Anderson, Dean of Students