



Hill-Murray School

The Catholic Benedictine Prep School

STUDENT PHONE AND SMARTWATCH POLICY & GUIDELINES

Note: The “smartwatch” component of this policy is currently under review. At this time we are not requiring students to lock their smartwatches in the Yondr pouch.

This policy will begin on September 9, 2024.

Parents are invited to learn more at Back to School night on September 4, 2024, and are encouraged to read the [President’s Perspective](#) from July 23, 2024, and the [President’s Perspective](#) from August 20, 2024.

As part of Hill-Murray’s commitment to providing students with the best learning environment, **phones, and smartwatches are not to be used during the school day.** The purpose of this policy is to limit distractions and improve overall student engagement, mental health, and well-being. Every student will be assigned a personal Yondr Pouch. While the Yondr Pouch is school property, it is each student’s responsibility to bring their pouch with them to school every day and keep it in good working condition.

DAILY PROCESS

When students **arrive at their first class of the day**, they will:

1. Turn their phone/smartwatch on airplane mode or power off.
2. Place their phone/smartwatch inside their pouch and secure it in the presence of their teacher.
3. Store their pouch in their backpack for the day.

At **the end of the day**, they will:

1. Unlock their pouch, remove their phone/smartwatch, and put their pouch in their backpack.
2. Students must bring their pouch to school with them each day.

Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/un-pouch their phones in either the Main Entry or the Office of Student Life.

VIOLATIONS

Pouch Damage / Lost Pouch / Use of Phone or Smartwatch During School

- **Pouch Damage:** If a student damages their pouch, a faculty/staff member will collect the student’s pouch/phone and turn it into the Office of Student Life. The student is charged \$30 for a replacement pouch. Upon a second pouch being damaged, the student is charged \$50 for a replacement pouch. Examples of pouch damage include: Bent pin, ripped fabric, deep scratches on the locked exterior and/or green ring, intentional pen marks on the inside of the pouch, pin and

button not fully recessing due to pin damage, the pouch is unable to function properly due to damage. Deliberately damaging a pouch will result in detention and/or a parent meeting.

- **Forgotten/Lost pouch:** If a student forgets their pouch, their phone/smartwatch will be collected, and parents will be notified. The student should visit the Office of Student Life for a temporary pass to show teachers who ask for a Yondr Pouch check. The phone/smartwatch can be picked up in the Office of Student Life at the end of the day. If a student consistently forgets their pouch, it is considered lost. There is a \$30 replacement fee for the first lost or damaged pouch and \$50 for any consecutive losses.
- **Use of Phone/Smartwatch during the school day:** For a first offense, the cell phone/smartwatch will be collected and brought to the Office of Student Life. The student can retrieve the items at the end of the day. Parents will be notified. Upon a second offense, the cell phone/smartwatch must be turned in at the Office of Student Life first thing in the morning for three consecutive days, and parents will be notified. Students will keep their pouch with them in case there is a pouch check during the day. Further violations will result in a parent meeting.

How Yondr Works



As students enter school, they place their phone in their assigned Yondr Pouch.



Students close and secure their Pouch, keeping it on them throughout the day.



When leaving school, students tap their Pouch on a Base to retrieve their phone.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I want to reach my child/my parents during the school day?

We want our students to be engaged in their learning. If you need to contact your child during the school day, contact the Main Office at 651-777-1376. This number will be answered during regular school hours.

What if there is a school emergency?

We will first direct our students to safety in a school emergency, following our school emergency preparedness protocol. Research has shown that when students are not on their cell phones during an emergency, they are better able to navigate to safety and follow important safety instructions.

Will my student's phone be safe?

Students are in possession of their cell phones in their Yondr pouch for the entire school day. We will advise students to store the pouch in their backpacks or locker where it is secure.

What if the Yondr pouch gets damaged or a student is caught on their phone?

The Yondr pouch is the property of Hill-Murray School. If a student damages their pouch or is caught on their phone, the teacher or administrator will collect the phone/pouch and call home. Subsequent violations will result in a parent meeting. Students will be charged for a lost or damaged pouch.

Student Questions and Concerns:

Q: Why are you punishing all of us when not everyone gets distracted by their cell phone?

A: I would challenge the concept that this is a “punishment.” It is an opportunity to experience the school day distraction-free in an environment where all students are cell-phone-free. While not every student experiences distraction in the same way, evidence shows that even having your device available takes away from the learning environment.

Q: I am a senior. Is this really teaching me to be ready for college? Am I prepared to function in the world beyond high school?

A: Yes! Learning to be present and attentive to your environment without the distractions of a cell phone is an excellent skill. Actually, many adults are not able to function in this way.

Q: I need my phone to coordinate rides and schedules, sometimes plans change during the day. What am I supposed to do?

A: This may require a change in how you have previously operated during the school day. An email is always an option, as students can access it on their iPads in middle school and Macbooks in high school. Cell phones will be available before and after school.

Q: If you are making us put our cell phones in a pouch, why don't you make teachers do the same?

A: Much like when you graduate from Hill-Murray, you must make choices about how you manage cell phones and other mobile device technology. Teachers and all adults are wise to find ways to be distraction-free during the work/school day.

Q: Students will find a way to hack the pouch and get their cell phones during the day, so why bother with the pouches?

A: Much like other expectations that we have for Hill-Murray students, we rely on students' good sense and compliance. There are consequences for accessing your cell phone during the day so if a student is found with their cell phone out of the pouch, the consequences will be consistently enforced.

Q: Why is this such a big deal? Cell phones are just part of life.

A: The big deal is that Hill-Murray is committed to student health and wellness and to providing a positive learning environment. We encourage students to consider the research and test it for themselves. After one quarter, semester, or even an entire year, do you feel a difference in your attitude about cell phone-free during the school day? While it may seem cliché, we are doing this because we care deeply about you.

Q: My parents don't care if I am on my cell phone a lot; in fact, they are too.

A: Cell phones and social media distractions are not unique to young people. I have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from parents, mainly because they understand how hard it can be to put the cell phone down. I am up for the challenge. I am committed to placing a stake in the ground that

says Hill-Murray cares about students. Hill-Murray cares about creating an environment where students can flourish and unleash their God-given talents. Where students can find their passion and become who they are truly meant to be. While this may sound idealistic, isn't that our goal? We are working toward an ideal school environment that supports our students - don't they deserve our best?