



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
FRANKFORD HIGH SCHOOL
5000 OXFORD AVENUE
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19124



DR. MICHAEL J. CALDERONE
PRINCIPAL

TELEPHONE (215) 400-7200
FAX (215) 400-7201

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Frankford High School believes in maintaining a safe and effective educational environment for all of its students. We understand that cell phones have great benefits, but cell phone use and other electronic devices such as smart watches and tablets, have increasingly become a source of distraction, anti-social behavior and conflict both in homes and at school.

Currently, at Frankford HS, less than 5% of our students scored at the proficient level on both the Keystone Algebra and Biology exams. Additionally, less than 20% scored proficient on the Keystone English exam. As of the end of last year, 40% of 9th graders, 62% of 10th graders, 58% of 11th graders and 30% of 12th graders were considered off-track for a 4-year high school graduation. This means that these students have failed courses which are now putting them at risk of not graduating or not graduating on time. Last school year we informally surveyed numerous students that attended school regularly and attended their classes but were still failing. When asked why they thought they were failing, a majority reported that they were unable to stay off of their devices, mainly their cell phone.

Research consistently shows that the presence of cellphones in the classroom can be detrimental to student performance. A 2018-19 C/Net and Computerworld and a Pew Study found:

- the average smartphone user checks their device 63 times a day
- 86% of smartphone users will check their device while speaking with friends and family
- 67% of surveyed teachers observed students being distracted by mobile devices
- 90% of surveyed teachers state the number of students with emotional challenges increased
- 47% of parents think their child is addicted to their smartphone
- 54% of US teens ages 13 to 17 worry they spend too much time on their phones.

It is our school goal that all of our students are successful and are receiving the education that they deserve. We believe that limiting distractions is integral to student achievement. We understand that removing external electronic devices from classrooms will not single-handedly drive up student achievement but it will allow students to be more engaged in class.

Cell phones have become a serious problem at our school. It has been suggested that we should ban cell phones altogether from the campus and not allow them in the building. However, many of our students travel long distances to and from school and need to be able to check in with their parents. Banning cell phones completely would make that impossible.

All of this has led us to the decision to implement the use of Yondr bags in our building.

Although we began messaging this to you in August, due to unforeseen circumstances, we have had to push back the original start date multiple times. As of the drafting of this letter, we are scheduled to begin the use of Yondr bags on Thursday, December 5, 2019.

With Yondr, students get to keep their phone with them all the time. When they enter school in the morning, they will turn their phone and/or other device off and place it in their Yondr pouch. The pouch then locks and they keep it with them all day. At the end of the day, they will be able to unlock the pouch at the exits, take out their phone and begin using it again. We believe that the use of Yondr in our building will lead to increased student engagement in school and success in the classroom.

Frequently Asked Questions about Yondr:

How will the Yondr process work at morning arrival and dismissal?

- All students will be assigned a Yondr pouch for their phone. The pouch is property of the school and is considered “on loan” to the student during the school year.
- Students will be assigned a case. Upon entering school, he/she will turn their phone off, place his/her phone and other electronic items inside of a Yondr case and lock it in front designated staff.
- If a student needs to leave school early, for an approved early dismissal, medical emergency, work roster, athletic event, or other school sponsored trip unlocking bases will be available to allow for a quick dismissal.
- Student will take their pouch to and from school with them each day.

What if a parent or guardian needs to reach their child during the school day?

Parents should refrain from contacting their child during the day, as they are engaged in learning. Should there, however, be a true emergency, they may contact the main office at 215-400-7200.

What if there is a whole school/district emergency?

School staff will be able to unlock a Yondr case in a matter of seconds for students once they are in a safe and secure location.

Will the phone be safe?

Phones will remain in the student’s possession. It is their responsibility to keep the case stored away. Frankford High School is not responsible for lost or stolen electronics.

What happens if a student forgets to bring their pouch?

- Their phone will be confiscated, placed in a bag and locked in a safe until 3:15 PM.
- At 3:15 PM, students will walk down stairwell 3 to room 029 and will retrieve their phone by showing their school ID.

If a student destroys their pouch the following will occur:

- Phone will be confiscated, placed in a ziplock bag and locked in a safe until a parent or guardian (listed in SIS) comes up to retrieve the phone during school hours.
- Student or family will pay a \$10 replacement fee for a new pouch.

If a student is seen using a phone, tablet, or watch in the building, the following will occur:

- The student will be reported to a dean or an administrator, their phone or device will be surrendered to school staff, locked in a safe and will remain there until a parent/guardian (listed in SIS) comes to retrieve the device during school hours.
- Students who repeatedly violate this rule will also be subject to disciplinary actions.

What if a student refuses to put their device into a Yondr Pouch?

- No student is permitted to have any device listed in the electronic policy in school unless it is in a Yondr Pouch.
- Should a student refuse to place their device in the pouch and subsequently refuse to surrender their device to be properly stored in a locked safe, the student will need to wait in the Welcome Center for their parent to come up to retrieve the device.

What if I have an early dismissal, athletic event, school sponsored trip, or a work roster?

- All students leaving for approved early dismissals, work rosters, athletic events, or school sponsored trips, will exit through the Welcome Center accompanied by their coach or school designee and have their pouches unlocked.

The following is an excerpt of our updated Electronics Policy from our Student/Parent Handbook:

ELECTRONICS POLICY- Effective on 12/5/19

Students are not permitted to bring any electronic devices to school including, but not limited to, the following: cell phones, smart watches, iPod, iPad, laptops, laser pointers, and electronic gaming devices. All students should not have earbuds or headphones on in the hallways in case of an emergency message being communicated over the PA System. Effective 12/5/19, students will no longer be able to bring their own electronic devices to Frankford High School. All students that choose to bring a cell phone to school will be required to place it in a “Yondr Pouch”. The pouch is property of the school and is considered “on loan” to the student for the school year. Students will need to return their pouches at the end of the year and must bring it with them and use it every day that they attend school.

Students must turn their phones off prior to locking them in the Yondr Pouch. Students will keep their cellphones in their possession all day. At the time of their approved dismissal (end of their respective school day or when signed out by a parent/guardian listed in the SIS) from school, students will be able to unlock their pouches and take their phones out. Unlocking stations will be available at all exits that are in use.

Students who choose to bring any prohibited electronic devices to school will have to surrender them to school staff. Students who repeatedly violate this rule will be subject to disciplinary actions.

Frankford HS is NOT responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged electronics.