

Cell Phone Policy 2021-2022

During the post session meetings of May 24, 2021, the faculty unanimously voted to not allow any student smartphones on the property of Fletcher Academy Incorporated or any school sponsored trips. In their stead, students can bring Gabb phones (gabbwireless.com) and use them during times previously allowed in the handbook.

Gabb phones are relatively inexpensive (\$99) and have a low monthly fee (\$20-\$25) and no contract. They use Verizon towers for service and get a pretty solid signal throughout the dorms and on our campus. They have unlimited talk/text but no data consumption, no internet browser, no games, and no app store. Gabb phones have a camera, a calendar, and a calculator, can store music, and can be located through GPS if lost. The two service plans are \$20/month (unlimited calls and sms texting - cannot send pictures or do group texts) and \$25/month (unlimited calls and mms texting - can send and receive pictures and do group texting).

Questions & Answers

1. Why did we make this decision?

In our effort to provide a wholesome christian atmosphere on our campus where students can excel in their studies, social development, work ethic, mental health, and spiritual growth, we prayerfully made this decision. After many years of observation, discussion, research, cell phone related misbehavior, and after much deliberation, the faculty decided we cannot allow the internet to be on our campus in an unfiltered manner anymore. Filtering personal smartphones is not practical, nor is it possible on the scale we would have to attempt.

2. How will students learn responsible use of their smartphones if they don't get experience now?

Given the current trends in society, we believe it is more important to provide students an environment free from the distractions and pitfalls of social media, gaming addiction, and easy access to pornography so they can experience the benefits of a life without the struggles of excessive technology consumption and addiction. Education on these topics and strategies for management outside of Fletcher Academy will be an intentional part of instruction both inside and outside of the classroom. It is our hope students will find joy in life where technology and the internet is not the dominant force.

3. Why is everyone being punished for the problems of a few students?

This is not a disciplinary decision. It was never our intention to allow the type of media available on the internet and personal computers/tablets on our campus without being monitored and filtered. Personal computers/tablets were removed many years ago from our dorms. Unfiltered internet and large data plans have snuck in like a trojan horse on smartphones used to communicate with family members and loved ones. The Gabb phone allows us to separate the phone/communication from the computer/internet. Our effort is not a punishment, but rather a return to our original intent to allow communication with family and friends while still being able to filter and monitor internet use by only allowing it on school devices.

4. How will students connect with friends that they only talk to through social media?

Students will have to communicate with those friends and get their phone numbers prior to coming to campus since social media sites will not be allowed on campus.

5. What will happen to a student if they bring an unauthorized phone onto the property of Fletcher Academy Incorporated or on a school trip?

*We are strongly committed to keeping student phones with internet access off of our campus. Attempting to subvert this policy amounts to willful and intentional insubordination. Since students sometimes calculate the risk vs. reward to determine if something is worth trying, we have decided to apply a suspension to any student who attempts to bring any other phone other than a *Gabb phone onto campus as well as a loss of any personal phone privilege for four months. Dorm students could still use a dorm phone to contact their parents in the event theirs was taken away.*

** Currently this is the only brand allowed, but other similar ones might be allowed in the future if they provide the same functionality.*

6. What will happen if a student misuses his/her phone?

If a student uses his/her phone to send inappropriate text messages, listen to music that is not in harmony with christian lifestyle standards, store and or distribute files that are not in harmony with christian lifestyle standards, or use the phone in any other way that might be considered harmful to the atmosphere at Fletcher Academy, the situation will be considered by the Administrative Council and a loss of phone privilege

will be administered appropriate to the severity of the infraction. Additional consequences may result depending on the situation.

7. Will I have to get a new phone number with a Gabb phone?

You can transfer (port) your existing phone number to a Gabb phone or you can get a new phone number issued. That decision is made during the sign up process with gabbwireless.com

8. Do I have to sign a contract with a Gabb phone and are there any discounts?

Gabb wireless is a monthly plan that can be cancelled at any time. There is a referral program to discount your original phone purchase as well as a multi phone plan discount available when you have 3 or more devices. See the Gabb Wireless webpage for more information.

9. What are the features and limitations of the Gabb phone?

What You Can Do

- *Unlimited calling*
- *Unlimited texting*
- *MMS texting (texting with pictures and group text on \$25/month plan)*
- *Camera (8 megapixel camera for pictures and video with filters)*
- *Music player (music transferred to the device by plugging it into a computer)*
- *FM radio (only works with wired headphones plugged in so not useful at FA)*
- *Bluetooth (can connect phone to bluetooth speakers)*
- *GPS (not for maps, but to help find a lost phone through the parent's app)*
- *Calculator App*
- *Calendar App*
- *Contacts App*
- *SDXC card (extra storage option for pictures, videos, and files)*
- *Unlock with fingerprint or passcode*
- *Long battery life (due to no internet connection)*

What You Can't Do

- *Connect to the internet*
- *Load additional apps on the device*
- *Video call*
- *Parental controls (no controls other than device limitations)*

- *Limit who the phone can call and text*
- *Turn off access during certain times of the day or night*

Resources Worth Watching/Visiting

Childhood 2.0 - Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=He3IJJhFy-I>

The Social Dilemma - Netflix only

Gabb Wireless - gabbwireless.com

Top Apps for Troubling Content - <https://www.bark.us/annual-report>

There is plenty of evidence that the internet can be an avenue for dangerous and immoral behavior. If you want to investigate further, just Google some of the apps listed above and search for studies about the impact of smartphones on the young and society.