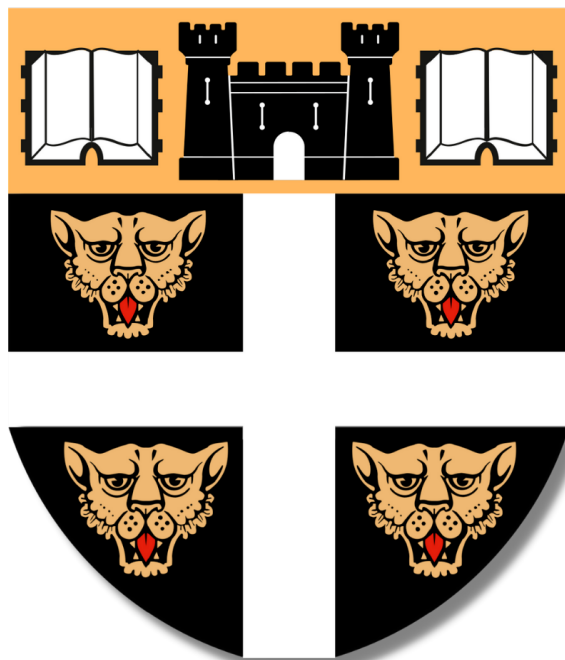


Mobile Phone Policy

Dover College



Owner:	Deputy Head, Pastoral, DSL	Date: August 2026
Approved By:	Chair of Council	Date: August 2026
Review Frequency	Annual	
Last reviewed on:	August 2026	
Next review due by:	August 2027	

1. Introduction and aims

Dover College recognises that mobile phones and other connected smart technology are part of everyday life. They can support communication, travel, accessibility and, in carefully controlled circumstances, learning. They can also create safeguarding, privacy, wellbeing and behavioural risks and can distract from teaching, relationships and participation in school life.

In line with current Department for Education statutory guidance, Dover College operates as a mobile phone-free environment by default during the school day. Pupils must not have access to mobile phones or comparable smart technology during lessons, transition times, breaktimes and lunchtimes, except where an agreed exception applies under this policy.

This policy aims to:

- safeguard pupils and promote their welfare, including online safety and protection from bullying, harassment, exploitation and inappropriate image-sharing;
- support calm, focused teaching and learning and positive face-to-face relationships;
- set clear and consistently applied expectations for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors, volunteers and contractors;
- provide appropriate arrangements for boarders to maintain regular and private contact with their families;
- recognise legitimate medical, disability, safeguarding, accessibility, travel and other individual needs;
- support responsible, respectful and lawful use of technology; and
- align mobile-device expectations with the College Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour and Discipline, Anti-Bullying, Online Safety, Data Protection and Educational Visits policies.

1.1 Scope and definitions

For the purposes of this policy, references to “mobile phones” include smartphones and other smart devices or wearable technology with comparable functionality. This may include, but is not limited to, smart watches, smart glasses, fitness trackers and other devices capable of sending or receiving messages or notifications, connecting to mobile networks or the internet, recording or transmitting images, audio or video, or sharing location information.

The College may apply this policy to any device whose functionality presents substantially the same safeguarding, privacy, behaviour or learning risks as a mobile phone, whether or not the device is marketed as a phone.

The policy applies across the College, including the EYFS, Prep School, Senior School and Sixth Form, and to both day pupils and boarders. It applies on the College site and, where relevant, during school trips, visits, residential activities and other College-supervised activities.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Headmaster has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for determining any individual exceptions that require senior leadership approval. The Headmaster may authorise appropriately trained members of staff to exercise searching powers in accordance with current Department for Education guidance and College policy.

The Deputy Heads are the policy owners and are responsible for day-to-day implementation, communication, monitoring and review. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding concerns involving mobile phones or smart technology are responded to in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All staff, including supply staff, are responsible for applying the policy consistently and proportionately. Volunteers, visitors, contractors and parents/carers must follow the relevant expectations while on College premises or supervising College activities.

Pupils are expected to follow the arrangements for their age group, hand devices in where required, comply with reasonable instructions from staff and use any permitted technology safely and respectfully.

3. Use of mobile phones and smart devices by staff

3.1 Personal use

Staff, volunteers and contractors must not use personal mobile phones or smart devices for personal calls, messages, social media or other personal activity while supervising pupils or in circumstances where such use would undermine the College's expectations for pupils. Personal use should normally be restricted to non-contact time and staff-only areas.

There may be exceptional circumstances in which personal use is reasonable, for example an urgent family matter. Where an ongoing exceptional arrangement is required, this should be agreed with the Headmaster or a Deputy Head.

Staff may use a personal device for an authorised work purpose where this is necessary and appropriate, for example multi-factor authentication, emergency communication, school trips or another agreed operational reason. Such use must remain professional and proportionate.

3.2 Safeguarding and professional boundaries

- Staff must not give personal mobile numbers or personal messaging/social-media contact details to pupils, except where a specific arrangement has been formally authorised for a legitimate safeguarding or operational purpose.
- Staff must not use personal devices to take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils, pupil work or other material that identifies a pupil.
- Where photographs or recordings are required for legitimate educational, safeguarding or College purposes, staff must use College-authorised equipment and systems and follow the relevant consent, safeguarding and data-protection arrangements.
- Staff must not store or download confidential College information or pupil personal data onto personal devices unless this occurs through an expressly authorised, secure College system and is consistent with the College's data-protection and acceptable-use requirements.
- Any concern arising from staff use of mobile or smart technology must be reported and managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Low-Level Concerns procedures and, where applicable, disciplinary procedures.

3.3 Work phones and College devices

Some staff are provided with College phones or other mobile devices for work purposes. These must be used only for authorised purposes, kept secure, and used in a manner consistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, Data Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy and acceptable-use arrangements. Access must not be given to unauthorised persons.

4. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The College recognises the heightened safeguarding requirements that apply in the EYFS. Personal mobile phones, personal cameras and other personal electronic devices with imaging or sharing capabilities must not be used by staff in EYFS teaching or care areas or while directly supervising EYFS children.

Images or recordings of EYFS children may be made only for a legitimate educational, safeguarding or administrative purpose using College-authorised equipment and systems, in accordance with College procedures and relevant consent and data-protection requirements.

Visitors, volunteers and contractors entering EYFS areas must follow the College's visitor arrangements for personal mobile phones, cameras and other imaging/sharing devices. Where required by the setting, such

devices must be left at the office or otherwise secured and inaccessible while the person is in the EYFS area.

5. Use of mobile phones and smart technology by pupils

5.1 Core expectation during the school day

Pupils must not have access to mobile phones or comparable smart technology during the school day, including lessons, transition times, breaktimes and lunchtimes, except where an agreed exception under section 5.5 applies. A teacher may authorise temporary use for a specific educational activity, trip or visit.

5.2 Prep School

Prep School pupils are not permitted to bring a mobile phone to school unless they travel by school bus, or another exceptional travel arrangement has been agreed by the College and a phone is reasonably required for the journey. In these cases, the device must be handed to the Prep School office on arrival and collected at the end of the school day. Smart devices with comparable communication or recording functionality are subject to the same expectation unless specifically approved.

5.3 Shell (Year 7) to Fifth Form (Year 11)

Pupils from Shell to Fifth Form may bring a mobile phone to College where it is needed for travel or personal circumstances, but must hand it in to their House at the start of the school day. Devices are stored securely and returned before pupils depart at the end of the school day. Comparable smart devices must also be handed in where their functionality would otherwise give the pupil access to messaging, notifications, internet, image, audio or video functions during the school day.

5.4 Sixth Form

Sixth Form pupils may retain their mobile phones during the school day. Use is permitted only:

- in the Sixth Form Centre; and
- when specifically directed or authorised by a member of staff for a lesson, educational activity, trip or visit.

At all other times, Sixth Form pupils must keep phones and comparable smart devices out of use and must not use them in areas shared with younger pupils. The Appendix to this policy sets out the Sixth Form acceptable-use expectations.

5.5 Exceptions, medical needs and reasonable adjustments

The College will make reasonable adjustments and other proportionate exceptions where required by law or where an individual pupil has a legitimate need. Examples may include:

- a disability, medical condition or healthcare requirement where a device is needed to monitor or manage the pupil's health;
- SEND, communication or accessibility needs;
- a safeguarding or welfare plan;
- exceptional family circumstances;
- a specific travel or transport need; or
- another individual circumstance agreed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Any exception should be documented where appropriate and limited to the purpose, time and location necessary. An exception does not create unrestricted permission to use the device for other purposes. Staff will take account of reasonable adjustments when applying this policy and associated sanctions.

5.6 Boarders outside the teaching day

During the teaching day, boarders follow the same rules as day pupils. Outside the teaching day, House arrangements apply. Boarders from Shell to Fifth Form must hand their phones or comparable smart

devices to House staff at the agreed time before bed. Sixth Form boarders may retain their phones overnight unless an individual welfare or safeguarding arrangement provides otherwise.

The College will facilitate arrangements for boarders to contact their parents/carers and families in private, at a time suitable to both parties, taking account of relevant time zones for international pupils. Where a pupil's contact with family is restricted by a legal, safeguarding or welfare arrangement, House staff will follow the individual plan.

Any monitoring or control of boarders' electronic communications will be proportionate, safeguarding-led and consistent with the College's boarding, online-safety and privacy arrangements.

5.7 Trips, visits and residential activities

For activities taking place during the normal teaching day, the College's mobile-free expectation remains the default. The trip leader may specify different arrangements where a phone is necessary for travel, safety, educational activity, independent time or an agreed individual need. On residential activities extending beyond the school day, pupils will be given clear arrangements for permitted access and family contact. These arrangements should be reflected in the trip planning and risk assessment where relevant.

5.8 Reporting a safeguarding concern

Nothing in this policy should discourage or prevent a pupil from reporting a safeguarding concern. Where a pupil needs to show a member of staff messages, images, videos, posts, call records or other content as part of reporting a concern, staff must respond calmly, preserve evidence appropriately, avoid unnecessary viewing or sharing, and refer the matter promptly to the DSL in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

6. Breaches, sanctions, confiscation, searching and device contents

6.1 Sanctions and confiscation

Breaches of this policy will be managed under the relevant Behaviour and Discipline Policy. Sanctions will be fair, consistent and proportionate, taking account of the circumstances, the pupil's age and maturity, SEND or disability, any reasonable adjustment, medical needs and any safeguarding considerations.

Where a pupil below Sixth Form is found in unauthorised possession of a mobile phone or comparable smart device during the school day, the normal procedure is for the pupil to surrender the device to Priory Lodge. The breach is recorded and the device may normally be collected at the end of the school day. A Wednesday Night Detention (6.00pm to 8.00pm) will normally follow, subject to the proportionality and individual-circumstances provisions above.

Where a Sixth Form pupil uses a device outside the Sixth Form Centre without staff authorisation, the same confiscation process may be applied and an appropriate sanction imposed under the Senior School Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

A device may be confiscated for a reasonable period where this is a proportionate response to a breach. Confiscated devices will be stored securely. Any longer retention, return to a parent/carer or other action will be determined under College rules and current Department for Education guidance.

6.2 Searching for mobile phones and smart devices

Searching a pupil or their possessions is distinct from examining the contents of an electronic device. The College will follow current Department for Education guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation.

The Headmaster, and members of staff authorised by the Headmaster, may exercise the College's lawful searching powers where the relevant legal conditions are met. Mobile phones and comparable smart devices are prohibited during the school day as set out in this policy and will be identified within College rules and Behaviour Policies as items for which a search may be conducted in accordance with the applicable guidance.

Before any search, staff must consider whether there is a safeguarding concern, whether the search is necessary and proportionate, and any relevant age, SEND, disability, communication or reasonable-adjustment needs. Any search must be conducted in accordance with the College Behaviour Policy and current DfE guidance.

6.3 Examining data or files on a confiscated device

Staff must not routinely inspect the contents of a pupil's device. Where a device has been lawfully confiscated following a search and there is good reason to examine data or files, any examination must be carried out only in accordance with current Department for Education guidance and College safeguarding procedures.

A good reason may arise where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that data or files on the device have been, or could be, used to cause harm, undermine the safe environment of the College or disrupt teaching, or commit an offence.

If staff suspect that a device contains a nude or semi-nude image of a child, they must not intentionally view, copy, print, share, store or save the image. The device should be secured, unnecessary viewing avoided, and the matter referred immediately to the DSL. The College will then follow Keeping Children Safe in Education, relevant UKCIS guidance and, where appropriate, police advice.

Where material may be evidence of an offence, staff must not delete it. The DSL or other appropriate senior leader will determine next steps, including whether the device or evidence should be passed to the police.

7. Safeguarding, harmful behaviour and illegal use

Mobile phones and smart technology can be used in ways that create or evidence safeguarding concerns. Concerns may arise in school or outside school and may still require College action where they affect a child's safety, wellbeing, relationships, attendance, behaviour or learning.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discriminatory abuse or threatening communications;
- sexual harassment, coercion, grooming or exploitation;
- upskirting, voyeuristic recording or other non-consensual photography or filming;
- the consensual or non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including images or videos that are digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, such as deepfakes or "deep nudes";
- sharing pornography, violent or otherwise harmful content;
- recording, photographing or livestreaming other people without permission in circumstances that breach privacy, dignity, safeguarding or College rules;
- abusive calls, messages, posts or content targeted at a person because of a protected characteristic or other personal characteristic;
- using a device to facilitate an offence, threaten or cause harm, or damage property; and
- location-sharing, impersonation, account compromise or other online behaviour that places a pupil at risk.

Such concerns must be reported to the DSL where there is a safeguarding element and will be responded to under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour and Discipline Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy and other relevant procedures.

8. Parents/carers, visitors, volunteers and contractors

Parents/carers, visitors, volunteers and contractors must support the College's mobile-free expectations and model appropriate device use while on site or supervising College activities.

Unless specifically authorised, they must not:

- use a personal mobile phone or smart device while directly teaching, caring for or supervising pupils;
- take photographs, video or audio recordings of pupils other than their own child, except where the College has expressly permitted photography at a public event and the activity is consistent with the College's safeguarding and privacy expectations;
- post images or recordings of other pupils on social media without appropriate consent; or
- use personal devices in EYFS areas contrary to the specific requirements in section 4.

Parents/carers should use the College office as the normal point of contact if they need to communicate with their child during the school day. They should not encourage pupils to bypass the policy by contacting them directly on a personal device during the school day.

Parents/carers or volunteers accompanying trips must follow the trip leader's arrangements for device use, photography and communication.

9. Storage, loss, theft, damage and data security

Pupils who are required to hand in a device must do so promptly and ensure that it is clearly identifiable where requested. Devices handed in during the school day will be stored securely in the designated location. Devices taken from boarders during evenings or weekends will be stored securely in the relevant House.

Pupils and staff should protect devices using appropriate passwords, passcodes and security settings and must not share access credentials with others.

The College will take reasonable care of devices handed in or confiscated under this policy. Subject to any liability that cannot lawfully be excluded, the College does not accept responsibility for loss, theft or damage to personal devices brought onto College premises, transport or trips. Lost devices should be handed to Priory Lodge so that reasonable steps can be taken to identify the owner.

10. Education, communication and publication

The College recognises that restrictions alone do not remove online risk. Mobile-phone expectations sit within a wider safeguarding, behaviour and educational framework. Pupils are taught about safe, respectful and responsible use of technology through age-appropriate curriculum, RSE/relationships education, pastoral provision and online-safety education.

The College will communicate the policy to pupils, parents/carers and staff and will provide reminders where necessary. Details of the College's mobile-phone policy will be published on the College website.

11. Monitoring and review

The Deputy Heads will monitor the implementation and impact of this policy. The policy will be reviewed annually and earlier where required by a change in law or statutory guidance, a significant incident, inspection findings or evidence that the arrangements are not operating effectively.

Review will take account of:

- safeguarding, bullying and behaviour incidents involving mobile or smart technology;
- the operation of searches, confiscations and sanctions;
- reasonable adjustments and agreed individual exceptions;
- feedback from pupils, parents/carers and staff;
- boarding arrangements and the needs of international pupils;
- EYFS safeguarding requirements; and
- current guidance from the Department for Education and other relevant authorities.

12. Reference framework

This policy should be read in conjunction with the current versions of the following statutory and regulatory guidance and College policies:

- Department for Education, Mobile phones in schools: statutory guidance (published 29 June 2026; schools expected to follow from 1 September 2026).
- Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Department for Education, Searching, Screening and Confiscation: advice for schools (current version).
- Department for Education, Behaviour in Schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (current version).
- Department for Education, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (current version, updated May 2026).
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage for group and school-based providers (current version).
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Dover College Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Behaviour and Discipline Policies; Anti-Bullying Policy; Online Safety Policy; Data Protection Policy; Staff Handbook (Code of Conduct); Educational Visits Policy; and Boarding Principles and Practice.

Appendix 1: Acceptable use of mobile phones and smart technology for Sixth Form pupils

Sixth Form pupils may retain a mobile phone during the school day, but this privilege depends upon responsible use. The following rules apply to mobile phones and comparable smart devices:

1. Use is restricted to the Sixth Form Centre unless a member of staff specifically authorises use for a lesson, trip, visit or educational activity.
2. Outside the Sixth Form Centre, devices must be switched off or otherwise kept out of use and out of sight, unless staff have authorised their use.
3. Devices must not be used in toilets, changing rooms or other areas where their use would compromise privacy or dignity.
4. Do not photograph, record, film or livestream staff or pupils without appropriate permission.
5. Do not share another person's contact details, images, recordings, passwords or access information without permission.
6. Keep passwords, passcodes and account credentials secure.
7. Do not use a device to bully, intimidate, threaten, harass, discriminate against or humiliate another person, whether through messages, social media, email, calls, images, video or any other means.
8. Do not make, request, possess or share harmful or illegal content. This includes the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including digitally altered or AI-generated images such as deepfakes or "deep nudes".
9. College behaviour and safeguarding expectations apply to online behaviour outside school where it affects the safety, wellbeing, relationships, attendance, behaviour or learning of members of the College community.
10. Do not use a device to access or share pornography or other content that is harmful, violent, exploitative or otherwise contrary to College rules.
11. If a message, image, video, post or other content causes concern, report it to a trusted adult. Do not forward harmful or illegal content merely in order to show someone else.
12. Comply promptly with a reasonable instruction from a member of staff to stop using, switch off, hand over or otherwise secure a device.
13. Mobile phones, smart watches and other unauthorised electronic or communication devices must not be taken into an examination or test environment except where expressly permitted under the applicable examination rules. A breach may lead to disqualification or other consequences under examination regulations.
14. Any agreed medical, disability, safeguarding or other exception must be used only for the purpose for which it was granted.

Name: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____