

Mobile Phone & Electronic Devices Policy

Abbey College Cambridge

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Date of last review of this policy	April 2026
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Primary person responsible for this policy	Carolyn Dunn
ISI/URN	136083

Circulation: This policy has been adopted by the governors and is available to parents on request. It is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and applies wherever they are working with children.

'Parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.

Contents

1. Scope of this policy
2. General rules for children
3. Searching, screening and confiscation
4. General rules for staff and visitors
5. Use of cameras
6. EYFS settings
7. Contact with parents/carers
8. Security
9. Health & safety considerations
10. Abbey DLD phones and devices

1. Scope of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out general rules about mobile devices and personal electronic devices, and to give staff guidelines regarding the appropriate use of such devices in the course of carrying out their duties.

The responsible, considerate and safe use of mobile phones and portable electronic devices is part of the multi-dimensional, social and behavioural goals which are embedded within our educational and management processes. This policy is part of our strategy for safeguarding children within our care. It complies with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and should be read in conjunction with our other policies, notably:

- Safeguarding and child protection Policy
- Online safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- ICT Usage Policy
- PSHEE Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Social Media, Mobile Phones and Student photographs
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014

The DfE statutory mobile phone guidance (2026) states that pupils should not use mobile phones during the school day.

This includes lessons, at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

2. Mobile Phones – Student Use

Abbey College Cambridge prohibits the use of mobile phones on the school site throughout the teaching day i.e. 9am-4pm

Year 12 and 13 students

- Students in Year 12 and Year 13 may not use mobile phones on the school site including during non-timetabled periods, at break or lunchtime.
- Students in Year 12 and Year 13 are permitted to use their mobile phones during non-timetabled lessons, at break and lunchtime provided they go off site during these times.
- Where students are off site, mobile phone use must be responsible and in line with the school's expectations for conduct and safeguarding.

- Year 12 and 13 students must not use mobile phones in the presence of younger students at any time on the during the school day. This expectation reflects the college's commitment to maintaining a safe and appropriate environment for all students.
- Abbey College Cambridge recognises the increased independence afforded to Sixth Form students and expects them to demonstrate maturity, responsibility, and respect in their use of mobile devices, both on and off site during the school day.

Year 9, 10 and 11 Boarders

- Boarding students in Years 9, 10 and 11 must hand their mobile phones in to the houseparent on duty when they register at the boarding desk in the morning.
- They are able to collect their phone when they register at the boarding desk at the end of school.
- Any student failing to hand in their phone will be sanctioned in line with the behaviour policy.
- Boarders in Year 9, 10 and 11 must also hand in their phones in at the start of prep. Phones should be placed in the box provided and turned on silent.
- Boarders in Years 9 and 10 will have their devices and mobile phones collected at bed time.

Year 9, 10, 11 Non-boarders

- Students in Year 9, 10 and 11 are required to hand their phone in when they arrive in school in the morning.
- They are able to collect them again when they leave at the end of the day.
- Any student failing to do so will be sanctioned in line with the behaviour policy

Reasonable adjustments

Abbey College Cambridge prohibits mobile phone use during the school day, subject to necessary and proportionate exceptions.

The College complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 by making reasonable adjustments for disabled students where required. This may include permitting mobile phone access where necessary to avoid substantial disadvantage.

In accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, the College supports students with medical conditions. Where a mobile phone is required for effective medical management, its use will be permitted.

The College will also allow limited exceptions based on individual circumstances. Any such arrangements will be clearly defined, proportionate, and restricted to specified purposes, times, and locations.

Sanctions

Any student found to be using their mobile phone on site during the school day without permission will be sanctioned in line with the Behaviour Policy.

3. BOYD Devices

Students are reminded that we operate a BYOD system and expect students to bring their laptop or tablet to school every day.

Appropriate usage of personal devices is as directed by staff and will likely include:

- Cloud storage of student notes and work (MS OneNote, Office.com)
- Remote learning (MS Teams)
- Research (as directed by staff)

Students are instructed to connect to the college's network when using devices at all times in the classroom, common rooms or libraries. This serves two purposes – to mitigate against any intermittent connectivity from 3G/4G and to protect our students from many of the dangers of the internet via our firewall and safe searching measures.

Students are liable for their own devices and for ensuring that their devices have sufficient power for the college day.

PSHEE, induction and assemblies will educate students on the dangers of the internet, including grooming, inappropriate images and bullying. Research shows that students are safest when they develop internet safety skills through managed systems. All staff must endeavour to incorporate safeguarding messages in their lessons, tutorials and at home. Staff training will also be provided on e-safety.

4. Searching, screening and confiscation

Staff authorised by the Principal have the right to search for, examine and confiscate any device where they reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm, to disrupt teaching or break the school rules. This will be done in accordance with the Department for Education's guidance: [Searching, screening and confiscation](#) (2023).

Inappropriate usage will be dealt with consistent with our policies on discipline, behaviour, sanctions and exclusions. Following an examination of an electronic device, the member of staff has the right to erase any data or files, if they think there is a good reason to do so. However, care should be

taken not to delete material that might be required in a potential criminal investigation. If a member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that a device contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must alert the Principal/Vice Principal Pastoral and, where there are safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead carolyn.dunn@abbeycambridge.co.uk. The device should then be given to police as soon as is reasonably practicable. Any incidents will be recorded in the online safety log.

5. General rule for staff and visitors

Staff should not use their personal online accounts, personal phone numbers or personal email accounts to communicate with students, parents or agents.

Staff should use their Abbey College email address at all times and should only communicate by email with students via the student's Abbey College Cambridge email address. Staff should endeavour not to communicate with students outside of their working hours. All communication whether through emails or TEAMS should be professional.

The use of personal electronic devices by staff or visitors for any purpose **when in the company of children** is prohibited¹. This applies to situations both on-site and off-site (e.g. on trips). When in the presence of children, personal electronic devices including mobile phones should be kept out of sight of students and set to silent.

Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as the staffroom).

In an emergency, personal calls can be directed to the school's landline number so that a message can be relayed to the member of staff.

Personal electronic devices may be used when not in the company of students. Where they are used, staff should be respectful and considerate towards colleagues and others, and should be mindful of setting an example, e.g. by not being unnecessarily distracted by electronic communications.

Staff must ensure that there is no inappropriate or illegal content on their personal devices. The Principal reserves the right to check the contents of a staff-member's devices should there be any cause for concern relating to our responsibilities for the safeguarding of children.

5. Use of cameras

An increasing number of electronic devices now have built-in cameras and have the capability to capture copy and transmit images and other recordings through a range of technologies and

¹ A pragmatic and common sense approach must be taken to the interpretation of this rule in the context of evolving technologies. For example, the **Apple Watch** and other wearable devices would technically be in breach of this rule. If staff choose to wear such devices, they must be especially mindful that their professional behaviour is not compromised, either in the quality of their vigilance and supervision of children, or in the example they set to children by avoiding being, or being seen to be, distracted or addicted to message and alert-checking.

formats. Staff must not take or transmit any recording of students on any personal device. Only school hardware must be used for this purpose.

No parent or visitor is permitted to use a camera (including a mobile phone's camera facility) whilst on school premises, except for some² specific events such as plays, recitals, concerts, sporting events, open days or other promotional events. We strongly advise parents against the publication of any such photographs on the internet (e.g. on social media), and will request parents to remove any such material if we deem it illegal, harmful or inappropriate in any way.

Where appropriate, our policy regarding this matter should be explained clearly to parents by a member of staff before difficult situations arise.

Staff should also be aware that taking photographs of colleagues using personal devices should only happen with the permission of that member of staff.

See our *Photos and Images Policy* and *Social Media Policy* for further information on these matters.

6. Contact with parents/carers

All contact with Parents/Carers must be made through the Abbey DLD Group network: emails must be from a Group account and telephone calls made on a Group phone. Personal phones or other personal contact details should only be used with parents in an emergency.

7. Security

Staff must ensure that personal electronic devices are PIN protected to ensure their own privacy and security. This also applies to the use of e.g. personal webmail accounts through school devices, which should also be password protected and not set to automatically log in.

8. Health and safety considerations

In circumstances where staff are lone-working in remote areas of the school, or out of hours, a work mobile or two-way radio should be provided if there is no land-line in the room.

Staff are reminded that using hand-held mobile phones whilst driving is a criminal offence.

9. Abbey DLD phones and devices

Any staff member who has been provided with a Group mobile phone or device must comply with Group policies, which are available on the Group [Portal](#). These phones must be PIN protected at all times. Mobile phone usage data and associated phone bills are checked on a regular basis.

² We reserve the right to prohibit the use of cameras for some events if deemed inappropriate by staff.