



Policy Title:	MOBILE PHONE & SMART DEVICE POLICY	
Author:	Deputy Head	Checked by: The Head
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1. Policy Statement

Duke of Kent School is a **phone-free school**.

We believe that mobile phones and other connected smart devices can be a significant distraction from learning and can negatively affect social interaction, attention, relationships and wellbeing. Our policy is designed to protect a calm, focused and supportive learning environment and to reduce the pressure associated with constant connectivity.

The School prohibits the **use of mobile phones throughout the school day**, including during lessons, between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime, in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory *Mobile Phones in Schools* guidance, which schools should follow from **1 September 2026**. The guidance applies to independent schools.

For the purposes of this policy, "mobile phones" includes smartphones and other communication or smart technology that the School has identified as subject to the same restrictions.

2. The Rules

- Mobile phones are **not permitted to be used, seen or heard on the School site during the school day**.
- Pupils who need to bring a mobile phone to School for travel or other agreed reasons must hand it in to the Front Office immediately on arrival.

- Phones must remain switched off or otherwise inaccessible to pupils while they are in School.
- Pupils must not use a mobile phone while travelling on School buses or while waiting for a School bus on School premises.
- The School's expectation is that pupils should leave mobile phones at home wherever possible.

The School's rules also apply to other devices with communication or smart functionality where these have been identified by the School, including smartwatches and similar devices.

3. Arrival and Storage Procedures

3.1 Reception Hand-in

Any pupil bringing a mobile phone to School for travel safety or another agreed reason must:

1. switch the phone off on arrival;
2. hand it to the Front Office immediately; and
3. collect it at the end of the school day as directed by the School.

Phones will be stored securely during the school day.

3.2 Once Collected

Once a pupil has collected their phone, it **must not be used on the School site**, including while waiting for a bus.

If a pupil needs to contact a parent/carer, they should go to the Front Office and request assistance.

3.3 Travel

The School strongly encourages parents to provide a **basic or "brick" phone** rather than a smartphone where a child requires a phone solely for safety when travelling independently.

The School will keep arrangements concerning the use of smartphones on School transport under review.

4. Smartwatches, Earbuds and Other Connected Devices

4.1 Smartwatches

Smartwatches which can independently receive messages, access the internet, make or receive calls, record audio/video or otherwise communicate are subject to the same restrictions as mobile phones.

Pupils may wear:

- standard analogue watches;
- standard digital watches; and
- fitness watches which do not have independent communication or internet capability.

Where a pupil requires a particular device for medical or disability-related reasons, the School will consider appropriate reasonable adjustments.

4.2 AirPods and Headphones

AirPods, earbuds and headphones must not be worn around the School site during the school day.

They may be used in lessons, study periods or other activities **with the explicit permission of the member of staff responsible.**

5. Contacting Home

5.1 Pupils

If a pupil needs to contact a parent/carer during the school day, for example because of a change to collection arrangements or a change to a fixture, they should go to the Front Office and request permission to use the School telephone.

5.2 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers should **not contact their child directly by mobile phone during the school day.**

Urgent messages should be directed to the School Office, which will ensure that the pupil receives the information.

5.3 Bringing Phones to School

Parents are strongly encouraged not to send their child to School with a mobile phone unless it is genuinely required, for example for independent travel.

Where a phone is required, it must be handed in at the Front Office on arrival.

6. Sanctions for Breach of Policy

The School will respond to breaches consistently and proportionately, taking into account the circumstances and any relevant individual needs.

First Offence

The device will be confiscated and stored securely.

It will normally be available for the pupil to collect at the end of the school day.

A double debit and subsequent lunchtime detention will be issued.

Second Offence

The device will be confiscated and stored securely.

It will normally only be returned to a parent/carer, who will be asked to collect it from the School Office.

A double debit and subsequent evening detention will be issued.

Third Offence

A third offence will normally result in an **internal suspension**, together with any other sanctions considered appropriate under the School's Behaviour Policy.

Refusal to Hand Over a Device

Refusal to hand over a mobile phone or other prohibited device when reasonably requested by an authorised member of staff will be treated as a **serious breach of the School's Behaviour Policy**.

Further sanctions may therefore be applied, potentially including suspension.

The School will take account of any relevant SEND, disability or other individual circumstances when determining the appropriate response.

7. Searching for Mobile Phones and Devices

Mobile phones and specified smart devices are identified as items that may be searched for under the School's Behaviour Policy.

Where an authorised member of staff has **reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil is in possession of a mobile phone or other prohibited device**, the School may exercise its legal searching powers.

A pupil's consent is not required where the School has the legal power to conduct the search.

Any search will be carried out in accordance with the Department for Education's *Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools* guidance and the School's **Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy**.

Searches will be:

- necessary;
- proportionate;
- carried out with due regard for the pupil's privacy and dignity; and
- conducted in accordance with the requirements relating to staff, witnesses and same-sex searching.

The School will make reasonable adjustments where necessary for disabled pupils or pupils with other additional needs.

8. Exemptions and Reasonable Adjustments

The School recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where a pupil needs access to a mobile phone or other connected device during the school day.

8.1 Medical Needs

A pupil may be permitted to use a mobile phone where it is required to manage a medical condition, for example where a continuous glucose monitor communicates with a mobile phone.

Such arrangements will be agreed with the School and will specify:

- the purpose for which the phone may be used;
- when it may be accessed;
- where it may be accessed; and
- who should be contacted if there is a problem.

A doctor's letter **may be requested where appropriate**, but it should not be an automatic requirement in every case.

The DfE guidance specifically recognises that mobile phone access may be necessary to support pupils with medical conditions.

8.2 Disability and SEND

The School will consider reasonable adjustments where a disabled pupil would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage by the policy.

An adjustment might, for example, allow access to a device for a specific purpose, at a specific time and in a specific location.

Such an arrangement does not mean that the pupil is exempt from all restrictions on mobile phone use.

8.3 Other Exceptional Circumstances

The School will consider other exceptional circumstances on an individual basis, including safeguarding or significant family circumstances where appropriate.

Any agreed exception should be clearly recorded and communicated to the pupil and relevant staff.

9. Trips and Educational Visits

9.1 Day Trips

Mobile phones are generally **not required on School day trips**.

Where a pupil needs a phone because they have an alternative travel or collection arrangement, the phone should either:

- be handed to the member of staff leading the trip; or
- be kept securely and unused, at the discretion of the trip leader.

This includes pupils attending away fixtures who are being collected directly from the venue rather than returning to School by coach.

Staff will have access to a School mobile phone which pupils can use to contact parents/carers where necessary.

Pupils should bring the relevant parent/carer contact number with them where this is required.

9.2 Residential Trips

The use of mobile phones on residential trips will be determined by the member of staff leading the trip, taking account of the nature, duration and circumstances of the visit.

Where phones are permitted, pupils will be clearly informed:

- when they may use them;
- where they may use them; and
- when they must hand them in or store them securely.

Use will be kept to a minimum and phones will normally be collected or securely stored overnight.

The trip leader may impose additional restrictions where appropriate.

10. Staff

Staff are expected to model the behaviour expected of pupils.

Staff should avoid unnecessary mobile phone use when pupils are present.

Personal mobile phones may be used appropriately:

- in the staffroom;
- in offices;
- in classrooms when pupils are not present; or
- where there is a legitimate professional, safeguarding, emergency or other operational reason.

Staff should not use personal phones to communicate with pupils unless this forms part of an approved School system or procedure.

11. Duke of Kent's Smartphone for Children Charter

Duke of Kent School believes that children should have the opportunity to enjoy childhood without the pressures associated with constant access to social media, messaging and the internet.

The School therefore **strongly recommends delaying the introduction of a smartphone for as long as possible.**

Where a child needs a device to stay in contact with parents/carers when away from home, the School recommends considering a basic "brick" phone in the first instance.

Parents may wish to explore options such as:

- Balance Phone
- HMD Phones for Kids

The School is supportive of the aims of the **Smartphone Free Childhood** movement and participates in its Schools Network.

The School will continue to work in partnership with parents to support healthy digital habits. This will include:

- parent forums and information sessions;
- visiting speakers where appropriate;
- education about online safety;
- PSHE teaching;
- Computing/ICT teaching; and
- assemblies and pastoral education.

Further information is available in the School's **Online Safety Policy**.

12. Policy and Guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy**
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Online Safety Policy**
- **Educational Visits Policy**
- **Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy**, where applicable.

It has been written with reference to:

- Department for Education, **Mobile Phones in Schools**, statutory guidance, updated June 2026.
- Department for Education, **Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools**, updated July 2023.
- Department for Education, **Behaviour in Schools**, updated February 2024.
- **Equality Act 2010**, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

- Department for Education, **Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings**, updated March 2024.