



**OXFORD
International
College**

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

MOBILE PHONE (AND PERSONAL DEVICES) POLICY (*STUDENTS – DAY AND BOARDING PROVISION*)

POLICY INTENDED FOR:	Staff Parents
CATEGORY:	All Students and Staff
POLICY IMPLEMENTED BY:	Principal Vice Principal Pastoral Vice Principal DSL & Boarding Head of Boarding
POLICY MONITORED BY:	Vice Principal Pastoral Vice Principal DSL & Boarding
REVIEWED BY:	Principal
CONSULTATION WITH:	Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Safeguarding Governor
REVIEW DATE:	August 2026
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1. Aim and Education

The College believes that connection, relationships and a sense of belonging are strengthened when students are able to engage fully in school life without the distraction of personal mobile devices. Our approach is designed to support learning, improve concentration, reduce disruption and bullying, and strengthen safeguarding by limiting unnecessary use of mobile phones and other smart devices during the school day. Where digital devices such as laptops or tablets are required for educational purposes, the school maintains appropriate filtering and monitoring systems, regularly reviewed in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*, to protect students from harmful or inappropriate content. This policy applies to all digital devices capable of communication or recording sound and images, including mobile phones, smart watches, smart glasses and cameras. It covers both school-owned and privately-owned devices used on site or to access school services and data by students, staff and third parties. This policy is available on the school website.

Through the Life Skills programme, students are educated about both the risks and benefits of digital technology. This includes online harms, misinformation and disinformation, loss of focus and classroom disruption, bullying and cyberbullying, deepfakes, generative AI and its ethical, environmental and social implications, the impact of AI tools on wellbeing and relationships, and the ethical and legal considerations surrounding the sharing of sexual images, including AI-generated content. Students are also encouraged to recognise and value the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment for learning, concentration and positive engagement within the school community.

The College supports appropriate educational use of devices, but only when advised by a teacher, and in advance of a lesson. If a teacher requires Yr11 students to access their phones for the purposes of educational use, they should escort the students to Reception to collect their devices, and ensure they are escorted back to return them securely. Teachers of Yr12 or Yr13 may require devices to be used or put away depending on the lesson. This should only be at the instruction of the teacher in those lessons.

The College will consider the appropriateness of students taking their mobile phones on educational visits. This decision, and details of use, will be considered by the staff member leading the trip, and the Educational Visits Coordinator during the planning stages, and communicated to students, and parents as appropriate.

Schools should ensure that pupils' educational experience on a school trip is not disrupted by the presence of mobile phones and should consider prohibiting or restricting their use.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out the college's approach to students' use of personal digital devices, including mobile phones, tablets and laptops, which more detail can be found in the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy. The College's approach to personal digital devices is grounded in statutory safeguarding duties, the 2026 [Department of Education Statutory Guidance, Mobile Phones in Schools](#) and the [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

All quotes in italics in the remainder of the document, unless otherwise stated, come from the [Department of Education Statutory Guidance, Mobile Phones in Schools](#)

The College takes its approach from the Department of Education Statutory Guidance that:

All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only.

Schools should develop a mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones.... throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

Boarding schools and residential schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the teaching day.

This approach:

- Ensures that mobile phones do not disrupt teaching and learning
- Retains clear behavioural expectations and proportionate sanctions
- Promotes self-discipline in managing study time
- Enables lawful search and confiscation where necessary
- Protects students through filtering, monitoring and safeguarding systems
- Promotes digital responsibility and wellbeing through education
- Reflects the specific needs of an international boarding community

The College also recognises that as a boarding community appropriate arrangements should be made so *boarders can contact their parents and families in private, at a time that is suitable for both parties, considering relevant time zones for international pupils*. This is also in accordance with the [boarding schools: national minimum standards](#)

The College recognises that:

- students in a modern, international community benefit from responsible access to technology
- as a boarding college, students must be able to maintain regular contact with parents and families in line with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS)
- personal devices can support learning, organisation, wellbeing and safeguarding when used appropriately
- students in the 6th form in particular (the vast majority of students) will soon be fully independent in a world that relies on proficiency within digital spaces
- students in Yr11 should not be disadvantaged in their experience of College life by being a small minority group within a majority 6th form school
- students should be guided to participate in expected social etiquette and norms in line with professional environments
- students may have increased risks or perceived risks when travelling to and from home within the Oxford urban environment, whether this be home to parents/carers or home to the boarding houses. *This allows all pupils to feel safe on their journey to and from school while removing digital distraction for the entirety of the school day.*

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all students (day and boarding)
- all personal digital devices, including:
 - mobile phones
 - smartphones
 - tablets
 - smart watches with communication capability
 - smart glasses
 - any device capable of recording, messaging or accessing the internet

4. Principles

The college's approach is based on five principles:

1. **Learning first** – devices must not disrupt lessons or study.
2. **Safety and safeguarding** – misuse, cyberbullying or harmful content is addressed promptly.
3. **Wellbeing and balance** – healthy digital habits are promoted and taught through our Life Skills programme.
4. **Communication** – boarders must be able to contact family and be contactable.
5. **Emergency use** – As a college using multiple teaching and boarding sites, security on travel

5. Expectations for Use

5.1 During the College Day

Yr12 and Yr13 students

The College acknowledges that students in the 6th form are in a period of education with increased independence and responsibility. For this reason, students are permitted to have a mobile phone with them in their bag. This is a privilege reflecting their status as older students moving towards adulthood.

Mobile phones must be **not seen and not heard** during the school day.

This includes *prohibiting the use of mobile phones by sixth-form students in front of younger pupils.*

Sixth-form students should remain subject to the school's behaviour policy and misuse of their phone should have the potential to lead to sanctions.

Unless explicitly authorised by staff:

- Phones must be switched off or on silent and out of sight during the entirety of the school day whilst in the London Place school building
- Students may use their phone only for the purposes of contacting home or other reasonable situations e.g. appointment planning, contacting the Independent Listener, utilising Whisper
- In order to utilise their phone for the reasons as stated above, students must inform the Reception staff that they wish to do so and request to use the meeting room opposite the Reception desk

- Students must not use their phone in any other area of the school building at any time
- The use of devices to play digital games or use social media is never permitted during the school day

Yr11 students:

Unless explicitly authorised by staff:

- Phones must be handed in at Reception at the start of each school day
- Phones will be stored in a securely locked, specifically designed cabinet, where they will remain on charge throughout the school day
- Phones can be collected by students at the end of the school day
- On request to their Head of Year or a member of SLT, students may use their phone at an appropriate and agreed time only for the purposes of contacting home or other reasonable situations e.g. appointment planning, contacting the Independent Listener, utilising Whisper
- The use of devices to play digital games or use social media is never permitted during the school day

5.2 Exceptions

The College recognises that exceptions may need to be made for students with:

Medical Needs:

The College ensures compliance with the statutory guidance [supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) to ensure all students are fully supported in managing their medical needs effectively.

Allowing a disabled pupil access to their mobile phone during the school day, where it is necessary due to the nature of their disability, may be considered a reasonable adjustment and a failure to do so may be a breach of the school's duty.

Where mobile phone use allows pupils to manage their medical condition effectively, it would not be reasonable for a school to prevent this.

- Students with specific medical conditions, such as diabetes, may require access to their mobile phones for health monitoring and communication
- The College will allow these students to keep their phones for necessary health-related purposes, following written approval from the Medical Team alongside the creation of an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP)
- The IHCP will be created by the College nurses, with input from the student, parents/carers (if appropriate), external agencies as necessary, and will detail how such technology, including mobile phones, will be utilised by the student
- Relevant College staff will be made aware of individual HCPs via the College nurses, in order to support the student accessing their phone, and training provided as necessary

Special Educational Needs:

- Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities may also be granted exceptions to this policy. This will allow those

students to use their devices for educational support or communication as per stated in their Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) or Individual Support Plan (ISP)

- IHCPs and ISPs will be created by the College nurses and/or the College SENCO, with input from the student, parents/carers (if appropriate), external agencies as necessary, and will detail how such technology, including mobile phones, will be utilised by the student
- Relevant College staff will be made aware of individual ISPs via the SENCO, in order to support the student accessing their phone, and provide training as necessary

5.3 Boarding Houses

Recognising the importance of family contact:

We recognise that for our international community, contact with home is only possible at certain times due to the time differences with the UK. Boarders may use their mobile phones when they are in the boarding houses. Boarding students will have access to their mobile phones until they arrive at London Place for the start of the school day. Boarders may make calls to family and friends in the boarding house in the morning before arriving at school. Yr11 boarders will be allowed to retain their phones until at London Place, at which point mobile phones will be handed in.

- Boarders may use personal devices while in the boarding houses
- Quiet hours following curfew (Yr11 19:00 GMT 19:30 BST, Yr12 20:00 GMT 20:30 BST, Yr13 21:00 GMT 21:30 BST) and lights-out times (Yr11 10:00pm, Yr12/13 10:30pm) apply in order to support and promote sleep and wellbeing
- Boarding staff ensure students are educated in positive sleep hygiene, as reflected in OIC's Sleep Champion BSA status
- House Parents are empowered to set limits or confiscate devices where necessary

Digital Wellbeing

Students are supported to develop healthy habits, including:

- balanced screen time
- respectful online behaviour
- critical evaluation of online content
- safe social media use
- sleep hygiene

Education sessions and boarding house guidance reinforce these expectations.

5.4 Examinations

Devices must be stored away during examination periods in line with all JCQ examination regulations.

6. Prohibited Use

The following are not permitted:

- use during lessons, break and lunch times, and any time within the London place building without permission in the designated meeting room

- photographing or recording others without consent
- cyberbullying or online harassment
- accessing inappropriate or harmful content
- using devices to disrupt learning or community life
- using social media (with the exception of WeChat for family communication) or digital gaming
- bypassing college filtering or security systems e.g. using 5G to circumvent college Wi-Fi
- sharing images or content that compromise safeguarding

Serious breaches may be treated as safeguarding or behaviour incidents, as detailed in the Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour Policy.

7. Responding to Misuse

Where concerns arise, the College will act proportionately and with regards to the Statutory Guidance:

Schools should feel confident to use their power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty where their policy is clearly breached, for instance where a mobile phone is used by a pupil or is heard ringing in a pupil's bag.

The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully. Staff should consider whether the confiscation is proportionate and consider any special circumstances relevant to the case.

Headteachers are backed by DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices, if they consider it proportionate, for whatever length of time they deem proportionate.

Confiscation as a sanction can be an effective deterrent for a specific pupil or a general deterrent for all pupils at the school.

Headteachers, or staff they authorise, have a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item.

Headteachers can and should identify mobile phones and similar devices as something that may be searched for in their school behaviour policy.

Responses to infringements around mobile phone use should be proportionate.

As this is the first term of implementing this policy, the effectiveness of this process will be reviewed termly:

- For Yr12 and Yr13 students, if their phone is seen or heard outside of the designated meeting room, a staff member will first highlight this to the student through a verbal warning
- Providing this initial verbal warning is immediately adhered to, it is recorded on a document by the member of staff at the Reception desk and no further action is taken

The Head of Year will check this document at the end of each day.

- Should a Yr12 or Yr13 reach a second verbal warning then the Head of Year will implement a confiscation of the mobile phone for a full school week. The student will then be required to follow the Yr11 protocol. This involves handing in their phone at the start of each school day, to be stored in the secure cabinet on charge, and collected at the end of the school day

- Once the week of confiscation is over and the Yr12 or Yr13 student is allowed to retain their phone during the school day, one further infringement can trigger an ongoing confiscation as managed by the Head of Year
- Should an infringement be more serious than a phone being seen or heard, such as a phone or device used for gaming, social media, any suggestion of bullying, misuse, or an inappropriate response to the member of staff highlighting the initial infringement, then a sanction can be escalated. This also applies to Yr11 students utilising a secondary or other device despite having handed in their primary device. This will involve immediate confiscation of the phone by the staff member escorting the student with their phone to be stored in the secure cabinet. Further sanctions may also apply as per the behaviour policy. In line with the Behaviour Policy, responses from the Head of Year and VP Pastoral may include as appropriate:
 - temporary confiscation
 - ongoing confiscation
 - restricted use
 - parental contact
 - safeguarding referral where appropriate

The college reserves the right to search or confiscate devices where permitted by law and safeguarding duties. If such a case were to happen, parents/careers and guardians would be contacted by the College to inform them and alternative arrangements made for student communication. Confiscated devices will be stored in a suitably locked secured cabinet and on charge.

Where concerns are raised by college staff around students not being alert in class, a meeting is arranged between pastoral college staff and boarding mentors and leaders. Boarding staff will then investigate potential reasons around sleep and work with the student and other relevant expertise on solutions, which may include arrangements for devices confiscation as appropriate.

8. Safeguarding and Monitoring

The College strongly believes that students should have a depth of knowledge and awareness, at an appropriate and age specific level, of the risks associated with mobile phones, devices and online activities. The College's aim is to ensure students feel informed, resilient to the dangers of mobile phone use, and knowledgeable about how to seek support. This is especially important given the age range of students (14 to 19) as they prepare to enter the world as young adults, needing to manage their own usage.

Pupils should be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision being taken by their school to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. These risks can include a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying.

Pupils should also be taught the benefits of having a mobile phone-free environment and be encouraged to see such an environment as desirable and valuable. This will help to create intrinsic motivation to support the school culture.

To protect students, encourage their understanding and enhance their knowledge:

- the College network is filtered and monitored, including for online gaming sites and social media during the school day
- College devices are monitored through Smoothwall, which is explained to students during induction and in the student handbook
- online safety education is delivered through the curriculum via Life Skills and assemblies
- staff receive safeguarding and digital safety training
- concerns are managed through safeguarding procedures

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- follow the details in this policy
- follow staff instructions
- report concerns
- use devices responsibly and when permitted

Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff in the College to action this policy.

All staff should consistently enforce the school's policy on the use of mobile phones.

Staff should follow the same directive given to students, that mobile phones must be **not seen and not heard** during the school day.

Staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day.... There may be occasions where it is appropriate for a teacher to use a mobile phone or similar device, for instance to issue homework, issue rewards and sanctions or use multi-factor authentication.

Staff are expected to:

- model appropriate use as outlined in the staff handbook
- only use their own mobile phones in front of students when necessary for purposes of work, in emergencies, or during school trips e.g. when taking a register
- enforce expectations consistently following the Behaviour policy and responses to misuse as outlined in this policy
- address concerns promptly

Parents/Guardians

The College requests the support of all parents and guardians to enable full implementation of this policy to support the College's expectations and to reinforce safe and responsible use.

Parents or guardians may discuss this policy at any time by contacting their child's Head of Year or the Principal directly.

The policy should be clearly explained to parents, including the reasons behind the policy and the school's expectations.... Where parents need to contact their child during the school day, they should be directed to the school office, where staff should be aware of the school's policy on relaying messages and facilitating contact.

Should a Yr12 or Yr13 student have their phone confiscated, and for all Yr11 students, parents will always be able to contact the school Reception to pass on any important or urgent messages during the school day. Students will always be able to contact parents both before and after the school day regardless of the student's mobile phone status during the school day. Students can request to call parents at a convenient time during the school day.

Schools should publish details of the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones.
This policy will be published on the College website.