

Mobile Phone Policy

Version Date:	July 2026
Signed:	Principal
Signed:	Chair of Governors
Review cycle:	Operational check after 1 term; then annual
Date of next review:	January 2027; July 2027

1. Introduction and aims

At Felixstowe International College ('the College'), our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is mobile phone-free by default throughout the school day
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of mobile phones, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones by students (day, boarding and sixth-form), staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the College's other policies, especially those relating to safeguarding and child protection, behaviour, boarding, educational visits, online safety and ICT acceptable use

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection and student wellbeing
- Data protection issues
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and bullying

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices with communication or smart technology, including smartwatches, tablets and wireless earbuds.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy has regard to section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and to the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance on mobile phones in schools and on behaviour in schools. It should be read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education, the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation, and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, boarding staff, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and to challenge any breach of mobile phone restrictions immediately and consistently.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the College, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for monitoring the policy, reviewing it every year, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

3.2 Governors / proprietor

The chair of governors will need to approve the original policy and the annual review will be completed by the governing board.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The College asks staff to set an example to students by modelling the mobile phone-free environment. The restrictions in this section are aimed at personal use in front of students; staff are trusted to use their professional judgement within these guidelines.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the College) should keep their personal mobile phones in their bags, on silent and out of sight, during lessons and other contact time, and should not use them for personal reasons in front of students.

Personal use of mobile phones should be limited to non-contact time and to areas of the College where students are not present (such as the staffroom or an empty classroom).

Staff may keep their phones to hand (in their bag, on silent) so that they are contactable in case of a personal or family emergency. There may also be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have fuller use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons, for instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow special arrangements. Where special arrangements are not deemed necessary, staff can give the College office number [01394 282388] as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

Staff may use their personal mobile phones for legitimate work purposes during the school day. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- Administrative tasks, such as issuing homework, recording rewards or logging behaviour sanctions on College systems
- Multi-factor authentication to log in to secure College networks
- Emergency evacuations
- Communicating while supervising off-site trips or sports fixtures, ideally using a College-allocated device (see section 4.5)

Where possible, staff should carry out operational phone use in designated areas (such as the staffroom or an empty classroom) to maintain a phone-free environment in front of students. When work use in front of students is unavoidable, staff should use their phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct.

4.3 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data or any other confidential College information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots. More detailed guidance can be found in the College's data protection policy and ICT acceptable use policy.

4.4 Safeguarding

Staff must use official College communication systems — not personal phones, personal numbers or unapproved messaging apps — to contact students or parents/carers. Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, including connecting through social media and messaging apps, and should avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson, trip or activity, this must be done using authorised College equipment (such as a College tablet).

Staff must not look through a confiscated student's phone. Any examination of data on a student's phone may only take place where authorised by the Headteacher and carried out in line with the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation (see section 5.8).

4.5 School trips and visits

Staff supervising school trips, visits and residential stays will be issued with a College mobile phone for the duration of the trip. This phone will be used for all trip-related communication, including contact with the College, students and parents/carers where necessary. Staff must not use their personal mobile phones for trip purposes, must not take photographs or recordings of students on personal devices, and must not share personal contact details with students or parents/carers.

Staff using a College phone must only use it for work purposes and must ensure that all communication and conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

4.6 Staff expectations and support

Staff are expected to apply this policy fairly and consistently across all students, confiscating devices that breach the policy and ensuring they are stored securely, and making exceptions only for students with approved medical or other individual circumstances (see section 5.5).

Where a member of staff does not follow this policy, this will normally be addressed informally in the first instance, for example through a reminder from their line manager. Persistent or serious breaches — in particular breaches of the safeguarding or data protection requirements above — may lead to disciplinary action under the College's staff disciplinary policy.

5. Use of mobile phones by students

Students must not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes, unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff (for example, for a specific medical reason). Students must also not use their mobile phones anywhere on the College site when arriving at, or leaving, the College.

Students will be taught the risks associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, so that they understand the decision to prohibit their use throughout the school day. These

risks include loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption and an increase in bullying. Students will be encouraged to see a mobile phone-free environment as desirable and valuable.

5.1 Day students

Day students who bring a mobile phone to the College must hand it in at the start of each school day at registration in the Main Reception]. Phones will be switched off and stored in a locked cabinet in the student's designated slot in Main Reception. Phones will be handed back to students at the end of the school day.

Students must not use their phones on the College site before handing them in or after collecting them: phones must remain switched off and out of sight while students are on site.

5.2 Boarding students

Boarding students will continue to hand in their mobile phones to be locked away during the school day, in line with the arrangements above. Access to phones outside the school day is governed by the College's boarding policies, which balance boarders' need to keep in contact with family (including families in other time zones) with healthy routines, including overnight restrictions.

5.3 Sixth-form students

To reflect their increased independence and responsibility, sixth-form boarding students are permitted access to their mobile phones, but may only use them in their own bedrooms. They must not use their phones anywhere else on the College site, must not compromise the College's mobile phone-free environment for younger students, and must keep their phones switched off and out of sight outside their bedrooms.

Sixth-form day students must follow the same rules as younger day students: they must hand their phones in at the start of each school day for storage in the locked cabinet, and collect them at the end of the school day (see section 5.1). By exception, a sixth-form day student may be allocated the use of a boarding bedroom as an individual study room, subject to approval by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Where such an allowance is granted, the student may access and use their phone in that room only, on the same terms as sixth-form boarding students, and the allowance may be withdrawn at any time if it is misused.

Misuse of mobile phones by sixth-form students will lead to sanctions in line with this policy and the College's behaviour policy.

5.4 Smartwatches and other smart devices

The restrictions in this policy apply equally to smartwatches and other devices with communication or smart technology (including wireless earbuds and tablets). Smartwatches with communication functions must be handed in alongside mobile phones, or left at home. A conventional (non-smart) watch may be worn.

5.5 Exceptions for special circumstances

The College may permit a student to keep or use a mobile phone or smart device during the school day in exceptional circumstances. Permission will only be granted where there is a documented safeguarding or medical necessity, for example:

- Students with diabetes who use continuous glucose monitoring systems that connect to a smart device
- Young carers who need to be contactable

To request such permission, students or parents/carers should contact the Senior Leadership Team via email: slt@ficedu.org. Any student who is given permission must adhere to the College's acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1) and their parent/carer must complete the permission form (see appendix 2).

5.6 School trips and visits

Students may be permitted to bring and use their mobile phones on school trips, visits and residential stays, at the discretion of the trip leader and with the agreement of parents/carers. Where phones are permitted on a trip, clear rules for appropriate use will be set out in advance and students must follow the acceptable use agreement in appendix 1, together with any additional rules set by the trip leader (for example, permitted times of use, and restrictions on photography and social media). Staff may confiscate a student's phone for the remainder of the trip if these rules are breached, and further sanctions may follow under section 5.7 on return to the College.

5.7 Sanctions for breaches of expectations (day students)

A breach of expectations includes, but is not limited to: using a phone during the school day; failing to hand a phone in at the start of the day (including falsely claiming not to have brought a phone to the College when the student has); using a phone on site when arriving or leaving; and refusing to hand over a phone when asked by a member of staff.

The following sanctions apply to day students (including sixth-form day students):

Stage	Sanction
First occasion	• Confiscation of the phone • same-day after-school detention • Phone to be collected by a parent/carer from Main Reception (8.30am–5.00pm)
Second occasion	• Confiscation of the phone • Isolation for one day, including an after-school detention • Phone to be collected by a parent/carer from Main Reception (8.30am–5.00pm)
Third occasion	• Confiscation of the phone • Suspension, followed by a reintegration meeting • Phone to be collected by a parent/carer at the reintegration meeting

Stage	Sanction
Further occasions	Further breaches will be treated as an escalation of defiance and will result in lengthier suspensions, in line with the College's behaviour policy

Confiscation is permitted under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and the Headteacher may retain a confiscated phone for the length of time deemed proportionate, in accordance with the DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools.

Breaches of this policy by boarding students (including sixth-form boarders misusing phones outside their bedrooms, or misuse of an SLT-approved study room allowance) will be sanctioned in line with the College's behaviour policy and boarding house rules and may include confiscation of the phone and withdrawal of phone privileges or of the study room allowance.

In each case, the sanction given must be reasonable and proportionate. The College will also consider whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs (SEN) or disability)
- The student's behaviour may indicate they are suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the procedures set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, including speaking with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or deputy, who will consider whether pastoral support, an early intervention or a referral to children's social care is appropriate

5.8 Searching and screening

Staff have the power to search a student's phone in specific circumstances, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation, where there is good reason to do so (for example, reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or that it is being or has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person). Any search will be carried out in line with that guidance and the College's behaviour policy, and the DSL will be involved where a safeguarding concern arises.

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The College takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos ('sexting'), whether consensual or non-consensual
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of their ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers are encouraged to reinforce and discuss this policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff while they are on the College site during the school day. This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of students, unless it is at a public event (such as a College fair) or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting them on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, when working with students or while children are present

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at the College (see appendix 3).

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not use their phones to contact other parents/carers, and must not take photos or recordings of students, their work, or anything else that could identify a student. They are also responsible for helping to enforce the College's rules for students using phones on trips, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the College office [01394 282388] as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile phone during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Students bringing mobile phones to the College must ensure that their phones are switched off and clearly labelled with their name, ready to be handed in and stored securely in the locked cabinet at the start of each school day.

Students must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or PIN codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any College phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

Phones handed in or confiscated will be stored in a locked cabinet in Main Reception. The member of SLT on duty at morning registration and end of day signing out students is responsible for the secure storage and return of phones, and a record will be kept of phones handed in, confiscated and returned.

The College accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on College premises or transport, during visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from the College, except where the phone is in the College's secure storage.

Lost phones should be handed in to Main Reception. The College will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

The College is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the College will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students
- Feedback from staff, including boarding staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education and any other relevant organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team (slt@ficedu.org) in a timely manner.

Appendix 1: Acceptable use agreement

This agreement applies to students who are permitted to keep or use a mobile phone due to exceptional circumstances, to sixth-form students, and to students using phones on school trips.

You must obey the following rules:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during the school day, including lesson times, between lessons, breaktime and lunchtime, unless a member of staff specifically allows you to for a specific reason.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent') whenever their use is not permitted.
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students.
4. You must not take photos or recordings (video or audio) of College staff or other students without permission from a member of staff.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone, or otherwise act in breach of the College's behaviour policy. This includes via email, text/messaging apps or social media.
8. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be a criminal offence, for instance 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't at the College.
10. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media.
11. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
12. On school trips, you must follow any additional rules set by the trip leader, including permitted times of use and any restrictions on photography and social media.
13. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, your phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the College's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
14. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. You will be asked to store your phone appropriately, or hand it to an invigilator, before entering the exam room. Bringing a phone into the exam room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

Appendix 2: Example permission form allowing a student to keep or use their phone

Use this form where the College has granted an exception under section 5.5.

Student name:	
Year group/class:	
Day / boarding / sixth form:	
Parent/carer(s) name(s):	

The College has agreed to allow [student name] to keep/use their mobile phone because they:

- Are a young carer
- Need the phone to support their medical needs
- Are attending a school trip or residential where the use of mobile phones will be allowed

Students who are permitted to keep or use a mobile phone must abide by the College's mobile phone policy and its acceptable use agreement (appendix 1). The College reserves the right to revoke permission if a student does not abide by the policy.

Parent/carer signature: _____

Student signature (where appropriate): _____

Authorised by:	
Date:	

Appendix 3: Mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones and similar devices at Felixstowe International College

Our College is a mobile phone-free environment.

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the College grounds.
- Please do not use phones where students are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to an area designated to you by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Do not take photos or recordings of students (unless it is your own child), or staff.
- Do not use your phone in lessons, when working with students or while children are present

The College accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the College grounds.

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the College office.