

ST DOMINIC'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Mobile Phones, Smart Devices and Personal Technology Policy

Academic year 2026–27 | EYFS to Sixth Form

Document control	Approved position
Policy owner	Headmaster
Operational leads	Head of Senior School; Head of Prep; Head of Sixth Form
Safeguarding lead	DSL
Oversight	Proprietor and Governing Body
Approved	25-8-2026
Effective from	1 September 2026
Review date	July 2027, or earlier following material change
Publication	School website; parent and pupil handbooks; staff policy set

Core rule. From arrival on the School site until end of formal lessons at 3.45pm, pupils in EYFS to Year 11 must not access or use a mobile phone or covered smart device. Sixth Form use is permitted only in the Sixth Form common room during non-teaching time. Individual, recorded exceptions apply only where authorised.

1. Purpose and principles

St Dominic's Grammar School provides a calm, safe and purposeful environment in which pupils can learn, socialise and participate without avoidable digital distraction. The School is mobile-phone-free by default in accordance with statutory guidance and KCSIE 2026.

- protect pupils from online harm, bullying, harassment, unwanted recording, image abuse and distraction;
- support concentration, positive relationships, physical activity, sleep and mental wellbeing;
- preserve privacy and dignity, particularly in toilets, changing rooms, medical rooms and safeguarding-sensitive situations;
- allow pupils to carry a phone for travel where parents judge this necessary, without giving access during the School day;
- provide proportionate medical, disability, safeguarding and exceptional-circumstance arrangements; and
- develop increasing responsibility in the Sixth Form without exposing younger pupils to phone use.

2. Scope and status

This policy applies on the School site, on School transport, at fixtures and activities, during educational visits and residential trips, and whenever a pupil is identifiable as a member of the School community. It applies to pupils, parents, staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors and external providers as relevant.

"Phone" includes smartphones and basic mobile phones. "Covered device" includes a connected smartwatch, camera or recording device, smart glasses, tablet used primarily for communication, wireless earbuds when used with a personal device, or any personal technology capable of messaging, notifications,

internet access, location sharing, audio recording, photography or video. School-issued devices and approved laptops are governed by the Acceptable Use and Data Security Policy.

Not a ban on travel safety. Years 7–11 pupils may bring a phone for the journey to and from School, but it must be switched off and stored out of sight before they enter the site. Younger pupils may bring one only under an arrangement agreed with the relevant Head of School.

3. Legal and regulatory framework

The policy has regard to the following, as applicable in 2026–27:

- DfE statutory guidance Mobile phones in schools (effective for implementation from 1 September 2026);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, including the mobile-phone-free default, online safety, child-on-child abuse, filtering and monitoring, and information security;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including safeguarding, welfare, behaviour, curriculum and leadership duties;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School's contractual authority to regulate conduct and confiscate items proportionately;
- Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils;
- Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, Sexual Offences Act 2003, Malicious Communications Act 1988 and Online Safety Act 2023 where relevant;
- current DfE guidance on behaviour, searching, screening and confiscation, and sharing nudes and semi-nudes;
- current EYFS statutory framework and ISI inspection framework; and
- JCQ regulations and awarding-body instructions for examinations and assessments.

4. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Governing Body	Approve and review the policy; monitor implementation, equality, safeguarding trends, sanctions and the Sixth Form exception.
Headmaster	Set the whole-school rules; authorise search arrangements and complex exceptions; ensure consistent, proportionate enforcement.
DSL	Lead safeguarding responses; advise on harmful content, child-on-child abuse, exploitation, image sharing, online bullying and evidence preservation.
Heads of School / Sixth Form	Communicate and enforce phase rules; record repeated breaches and approved adaptations; liaise with parents.
Staff	Model appropriate use; enforce calmly and consistently; confiscate only in accordance with this policy; report safeguarding concerns immediately.
Pupils	Follow the rule, hand over a device when directed, protect privacy, report concerns and never conceal or facilitate another pupil's breach.
Parents	Support the rule; use the School office for daytime messages; avoid contacting pupils directly during School hours; collect confiscated devices when required.

5. Age- and phase-based rules

Phase	Bringing a device	Permitted access and use
EYFS and Years 1–6	A phone or covered device should not be brought to School. An exceptional travel, medical or family arrangement must be agreed in advance with the Head of Prep.	None unless directly supervised under the written arrangement. A device brought accidentally must be handed to staff for safekeeping.
Years 7–11	A phone may be carried for travel. It must be switched off—not silent or airplane mode—and stored out of sight in the pupil's bag or other place directed by the School before entering the site. Connected watches must be disabled and stored.	No access or use from arrival until the pupil has left the site. This includes lessons, movement time, breaks, lunch, clubs, detention and supervised study. Permission for a specific purpose must be explicit and time-limited.
Sixth Form	A phone may be brought to School and remains the pupil's responsibility.	Use only in the Sixth Form common room during non-teaching time. It must be off and out of sight in lessons, assemblies, study periods, corridors, dining areas, libraries, events and anywhere younger pupils are present. Staff may withdraw the privilege individually or collectively.
All phases	School does not accept responsibility for ordinary loss, theft or damage except where legal responsibility arises or the device is held by the School.	No device may ever be used in toilets, changing rooms, showers, medical or counselling areas, examinations, worship, safeguarding meetings or other restricted locations.

6. The School day and site boundaries

- “Arrival” means entering any part of the School site, including gates, car parks, outdoor areas and reception. “Departure” means leaving the site after the final authorised activity.
- A pupil must not check a device at the gate, between buildings, during lunch, in a pocket, under a desk or through a connected watch. A visible, audible, vibrating or actively connected device constitutes access.
- Teachers will not direct pupils to use a personal mobile phone for learning, homework, rewards, authentication or scanning codes. Approved School devices or another method will be used. IN rare circumstances a phone might be used to promote learning under specific direction.
- If a family needs to send an urgent message, it must contact the School office. Pupils who need to contact home must ask a member of staff and use an approved School route.
- Pupils leaving the site with formal permission may use a phone only once outside the site, unless the Headmaster or relevant Head of School has set a different arrangement.
- The rule applies during fixtures and detention while the pupil remains under School supervision.

7. Sixth Form limited-use privilege

The Sixth Form arrangement is a deliberate exception permitted by statutory guidance to recognise increasing independence. It is not an entitlement and must not compromise the phone-free environment for younger pupils.

- Use is confined to the Sixth Form common room during break, lunch or another period expressly designated as non-teaching time.
- Phones must not be used in front of younger pupils or lent to them. Sixth Form pupils must not invite younger pupils into the common room to access a device.
- Headphones or earbuds may be used quietly only where the Head of Sixth Form permits; users must remain aware of announcements, supervision and others.

- Photography, filming, gaming that causes disturbance, speaker audio, inappropriate content, online harassment, live streaming and commercial activity are prohibited.
- Study periods are teaching time for this purpose. A supervising teacher may authorise a laptop but not a phone unless an individual exception applies.
- Misuse may lead to confiscation, loss of common-room phone privileges, other Behaviour Policy sanctions and safeguarding action.

8. Authorised exceptions and reasonable adjustments

An exception must be necessary, proportionate, documented and no wider than required. The School will not require a pupil to disclose private information publicly. Arrangements may be authorised for:

- a disability or medical condition, including a phone linked to continuous glucose monitoring or another health device;
- SEND where phone access is a reasonable adjustment and a less intrusive alternative would not meet the need;
- a young carer, a pupil with a significant home circumstance or a time-limited safeguarding plan;
- an emergency or a specific off-site safety arrangement; or
- a supervised curriculum, examination-access or evidence-sharing purpose that cannot reasonably be achieved with a School device.

The plan will identify the device, purpose, times, location, supervising adult, privacy safeguards, storage and review date. Approval normally rests with the relevant Head of School, with DSL, SENCo or medical advice as appropriate. An exception does not authorise social media, recording or unrelated use.

9. Prohibited conduct and safeguarding

The following are serious breaches whether committed on or off site where they affect a pupil, staff member or the School:

- photographing, filming or recording another person without permission, especially in a private or vulnerable situation;
- creating, requesting, possessing, sharing or threatening to share nude or semi-nude images, sexual content, upskirting images, voyeuristic recordings or AI-generated sexualised/deepfake material;
- cyberbullying, harassment, hate speech, impersonation, humiliation, coercion, sexual harassment, doxxing, malicious communications or discriminatory abuse;
- live streaming, location tracking, publishing a person's whereabouts or sharing School security information;
- accessing pornography, extremist material, violence, self-harm content, illegal content or material harmful to children;
- using a device to cheat, photograph assessment material, obtain unauthorised assistance, use generative AI improperly or compromise examination security;
- contacting an adult contrary to safeguarding boundaries or arranging unauthorised meetings; and
- using a device to summon outsiders, facilitate violence, supply prohibited items or obstruct an investigation.

Safeguarding overrides discipline. Where a device incident may indicate abuse, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, criminality, self-harm, radicalisation or risk to a child, staff must preserve immediate safety and refer promptly to the DSL. They must not conduct their own digital investigation or forward harmful content.

10. Responding to a breach

1. The member of staff states the rule and directs the pupil to switch off and hand over the device. Staff should avoid confrontation and preserve the pupil's dignity.
2. The device is placed in a labelled secure location and the handover is recorded where it will not be returned immediately.
3. The staff member records the behaviour and reports any safeguarding indicators to the DSL without delay.
4. The relevant leader decides the return arrangements and proportionate sanction, considering age, SEND, medical needs, safeguarding, intent, impact, repetition and previous support.

5. If the pupil refuses, staff do not use force merely to obtain a phone. The pupil is referred immediately to a senior leader; parents may be contacted and further sanctions applied.
6. Any suspected crime, prohibited item or immediate risk is escalated to the Headmaster and DSL, who decide whether police, children's social care or another agency should be involved.

11. Confiscation, retention and return

Circumstance	Normal response
First low-level breach	Confiscation until the end of the School day; reminder or Behaviour Policy sanction; return to the pupil where appropriate.
Repeated or deliberate breach	Confiscation; parent informed; device may be returned only to a parent; detention, loss of privilege or other proportionate sanction.
Sixth Form misuse	Confiscation and possible removal of the common-room exception for a defined period; serious or repeated misuse may lead to wider sanctions.
Safeguarding or suspected criminal concern	Secure the device without exploring content; notify the DSL/Headmaster; preserve evidence and follow agency advice. Return may be delayed lawfully.
Examination breach	Secure the device and report immediately to the Exams Officer; follow JCQ/awarding-body rules and the Malpractice Policy.
Uncollected device	Store securely, record custody and contact parents. The School will not post a device or release it to an unauthorised person.

The School will take reasonable care of a confiscated device. Staff must not use, charge, reset, unlock, browse or alter it except where specifically authorised and lawful. SIM cards and accessories remain with the device unless separation is necessary to preserve safety or evidence.

12. Searching and examination of content

As an independent school, St Dominic's will not assume that every statutory search power applicable to maintained schools and academies applies in the same way. Its primary authority arises from the parent–School contract, published School rules, consent and the need to safeguard pupils.

- Only the Headmaster or a specifically authorised senior member of staff may direct or oversee a search for a phone or covered device under School rules.
- The pupil should ordinarily be asked to produce and hand over the item voluntarily. Any search of possessions must be justified, proportionate, respectful, appropriately witnessed and recorded.
- Staff must not conduct an intimate search. Force will not be used solely to recover a device. Where a prohibited item or serious criminal risk is suspected, police advice or attendance should be sought.
- Staff must not routinely require a passcode or inspect content. If content may evidence a safeguarding or criminal concern, the DSL/Headmaster decides the next step and may seek police advice.
- A pupil may be asked to display particular content voluntarily where this is necessary and proportionate, but staff should avoid viewing, copying or forwarding sexual or otherwise harmful imagery.
- Deletion of content must not be undertaken casually. Evidence must be preserved where a safeguarding referral, criminal investigation, complaint or disciplinary process may follow.

13. Harmful images, nudes and semi-nudes

Staff who become aware of nude or semi-nude images, sexualised deepfakes or voyeuristic material must follow the School's safeguarding procedure and current national guidance. They must not view an image unless unavoidable, copy it, print it, save it to a personal device, forward it, ask a pupil to send it, or investigate beyond establishing what has happened.

The DSL will conduct the risk assessment, consider immediate protection, parents, children's social care and police, and record decisions. A child who has created or shared content may also be a victim. The response will be child-centred and will distinguish safeguarding support from proportionate behaviour consequences.

14. Examinations, assessments and academic integrity

- Phones, connected watches, earbuds and unauthorised devices must not enter an examination room unless surrendered exactly as directed by the Exams Officer. A device that is switched off remains unauthorised if brought into the room.
- JCQ and awarding-body rules take precedence. Possession may be reported even if the device was not used and may jeopardise marks or qualifications.
- Phones must not be used to capture papers, access notes, communicate, obtain AI assistance, authenticate another person's work or compromise controlled assessment, coursework or NEA.
- The Examinations Malpractice and Maladministration Policy applies to suspected breaches.

15. Trips, fixtures, transport and residential activities

The Visit Leader will state the device rule in the approved visit plan and parent information. The default School-day rule continues, but a risk assessment may permit controlled use outside teaching time, particularly on residential or overseas visits.

- School transport is part of the School day: devices remain off and stored unless the driver or supervising staff authorise a specific use.
- Pupils must not use phones while crossing roads, boarding vehicles, during headcounts, safety briefings or adventurous activities.
- Parents must not rely on a pupil's phone for emergency contact; the Visit Leader's approved School contact route must be used.
- On residential visits, staff will set contact windows, storage, bedtime and photography rules. Devices may be collected overnight where proportionate.
- A pupil must not publish live locations, itineraries, room numbers, images of passports or travel documents, or content compromising another pupil's privacy.
- Any arrangement must address pupils without devices so that participation, information and safety do not depend on ownership.

16. EYFS and younger pupils

Personal phones and cameras present particular safeguarding and data-protection risks in EYFS. Pupils should not bring them. Staff, volunteers and visitors must not use personal devices to photograph, film or record children. Only School-authorized equipment and systems may be used, stored and shared in accordance with the EYFS, safeguarding and data-protection procedures.

17. Staff, visitors and parents

- Staff must not use a personal phone for private purposes in front of pupils. Limited professional use—such as multi-factor authentication, an emergency, a School-approved application or lone-working safety—must be discreet, necessary and consistent with the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Staff must not use personal devices to photograph, record or communicate privately with pupils. School-approved accounts, devices and channels must be used.
- Visitors, contractors and volunteers must keep phones silent and out of sight around pupils and must never photograph or record without express School authorisation.
- Parents must not photograph or film where the School has prohibited it, and must not publish images of other children without appropriate permission.
- At performances, fixtures and events, the School may issue event-specific photography and live-streaming rules. Safeguarding concerns override personal preference.

18. Communication, emergencies and critical incidents

Parents who need to contact a pupil during the day must call the School office. The School will relay urgent messages and facilitate contact where appropriate. Pupils must not use a hidden phone because they believe a matter is urgent; they should approach a member of staff, reception or the DSL.

During lockdown, evacuation, a missing-pupil incident or another emergency, pupils must follow staff instructions and must not call, film, live stream, post or share locations unless specifically authorised. Uncontrolled communication can spread misinformation, reveal protected locations, overload networks or increase risk. The School's restricted emergency plan governs communications.

19. Education, pastoral support and reporting

A phone-free policy complements rather than replaces online-safety education. Through computing, PSHE, RSE, Citizenship, assemblies and pastoral work, pupils will learn about the 4Cs of online risk—content, contact, conduct and commerce—privacy, consent, misinformation, algorithms, scams, pornography, harmful content, cyberbullying, image sharing, AI-generated material, reporting and help-seeking.

Pupils are encouraged to report concerns to any trusted adult, the DSL or a deputy. Where evidence is on a pupil's device, staff will enable safe access for reporting without treating that necessary disclosure as a policy breach.

20. Equality, SEND and proportionality

The School will apply the policy consistently but not mechanically. It will make reasonable adjustments for disability and consider SEND, medical needs, age, communication needs, trauma, young-carer responsibilities and safeguarding circumstances before deciding adaptations or sanctions. Equal treatment does not always mean identical treatment.

No pupil will be disadvantaged because their family cannot provide a phone, smart device or data contract. Curriculum and essential School communication will not depend on personal phone ownership.

21. Complaints, records and review

Operational concerns should be raised with the relevant Head of School. Safeguarding concerns go directly to the DSL. A parent who remains dissatisfied may use the published Complaints Procedure. Confiscation, exceptions, serious incidents and repeated breaches will be recorded proportionately and handled under the School's privacy arrangements.

The Headmaster will review implementation at least annually with the DSL and relevant leaders. The Governing Body will receive assurance on compliance with statutory guidance, consistency, safeguarding trends, pupil and parent feedback, equality, sanctions, device loss or damage and whether the Sixth Form exception remains effective.

Appendix A – Quick rules for pupils

Who	What you must do	What happens if you breach the rule
EYFS–Year 6	Do not bring a phone or covered smart device unless the Head of Prep has approved an exception. Hand in anything brought accidentally.	The device is secured; parents are informed as appropriate; repeated or deliberate breaches are managed under the Behaviour Policy.
Years 7–11	Before entering the site, switch the device fully off and store it out of sight. Do not access it until you have left the site.	The device is confiscated. Repetition may require parent collection and further sanction.
Sixth Form	Use only in the Sixth Form common room during non-teaching time. Keep it off and out of sight everywhere else and never use it in front of younger pupils.	Confiscation and possible temporary or permanent loss of the common-room privilege, plus other sanctions.
Everyone	Never record without permission; never use a device in toilets/changing areas; never share harmful, sexual or humiliating content; report concerns immediately.	Safeguarding action, parent contact, Behaviour Policy sanctions, examination reporting and/or agency referral as appropriate.

Remember. If home needs you, the School office will contact you. If you need home, ask a member of staff. If something harmful is on your phone, tell a trusted adult or the DSL—you will be helped to report it safely.

Appendix B – Individual exception and adjustment record

Field	Record
Pupil / year / date	_____
Reason and evidence	☐ Medical ☐ Disability/SEND ☐ Young carer/home ☐ Safeguarding ☐ Other _____
Purpose of access	_____
Device and function permitted	_____
Times / location / supervision	_____
Restrictions	No recording/social media/unrelated use, plus: _____
Alternative considered	_____
Pupil and parent briefing	_____
Advice	☐ DSL ☐ SENCo ☐ Medical lead ☐ Head of School ☐ Other
Approval and review	Approved by: _____ Date: _____ Review: _____

Appendix C – Confiscation and incident record

Field	Record
Pupil / year / date / time	_____
Device / identifying details	_____
Location and circumstances	_____ _____
Rule breached / staff instruction	_____
Pupil response	☐ Handed over ☐ Refused ☐ Exception claimed ☐ Other: _____
Safeguarding indicators	☐ None apparent ☐ DSL informed at _____ Concern: _____
Secure storage / custody	Location: _____ Received by: _____
Sanction / support / parent contact	_____ _____
Return	Returned to: ☐ Pupil ☐ Parent ☐ Police/agency Name/signature: _____ Date/time: _____
Follow-up and review	_____

Appendix D – Annual governance assurance

- ☐ Policy is published, communicated and aligned with the Behaviour and Safeguarding policies.
- ☐ EYFS–Year 11 pupils do not have access to phones during the School day except under recorded arrangements.
- ☐ Sixth Form use remains confined to the common room and is not visible to younger pupils.
- ☐ Staff model the policy and personal devices are not used to photograph or contact pupils.
- ☐ Exceptions and reasonable adjustments are necessary, proportionate and reviewed.
- ☐ Confiscation, return and incident records show consistent and proportionate practice.
- ☐ Safeguarding referrals, image-sharing incidents, bullying, complaints and patterns have been reviewed.
- ☐ Examinations, trips, transport, events and emergency procedures are aligned.
- ☐ Pupil and parent understanding has been checked and education on online risk remains effective.
- ☐ The Governing Body is satisfied that statutory guidance and KCSIE 2026 are implemented effectively.

Actions required: _____

Nominated governor: _____ Date: _____

Headmaster: _____ Date: _____

Key references

- Department for Education, Mobile phones in schools, statutory guidance updated 29 June 2026.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, especially paragraphs 162–178.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- DfE Behaviour in schools and Searching, screening and confiscation guidance, applied with care to the independent-school context.
- UK Council for Internet Safety guidance on sharing nudes and semi-nudes.
- JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations and current awarding-body regulations.

- Independent Schools Inspectorate inspection framework.

The School will check these sources at review and update the policy sooner if law, statutory guidance, examination rules or safeguarding practice changes.