

Smart Device Policy

Version:	2.0 – changes reflect adoption of phone pouches
Author:	AP for Behaviour and culture
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Legislation or relevant documentation:	DfE <i>Mobile phones in schools</i> (statutory from 29 June 2026, followed from 1 September 2026); KCSIE 2026; <i>Behaviour in schools</i> (2024); <i>Searching, screening and confiscation</i> (2022)
Related Policies	Behaviour Policy; Child Protection and Safeguarding; SEND; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions; Staff Code of Conduct; Online Safety; Educational Visits

1. Purpose and rationale

Phones are locked away so that lessons, corridors and social times are free of distraction, filming and online conflict. The pouch makes the rule visible and easy to keep, rather than relying on students resisting a phone in their pocket.

The policy aims to:

- protect learning time and concentration in every lesson
- reduce online bullying, filming and image-sharing during the school day
- give students social times built around face-to-face friendship and activity
- reduce safeguarding risk from contact, content and coercion while students are on site
- give staff one simple, consistent routine instead of repeated low-level confiscations

The policy reflects the College Values. **Responsibility** and **Integrity** mean keeping the pouch locked when no one is watching. **Care** means protecting each other from filming and online harm.

2. Scope and legal context

The policy covers all students in Years 7 to 11 whenever they are on the college site, from arrival until they leave. This includes registration, lessons, break, lunch and detentions, and after-school clubs, rehearsals, performances and other events. It also applies on all college trips and visits off site.

Devices covered: mobile phones; smartwatches and any other device that can call, message, track location or connect to the internet; and earbuds or headphones. All of these must be locked in the pouch with the phone. They may not be worn, or kept loose in a bag or pocket, while on site. Connected watches and similar devices are included to meet DfE expectations for phones and similar devices, and so that messages and notifications cannot reach a student on their wrist while their phone is locked away.

Sixth Form: Sixth Form students are not issued pouches by default. Phones must not be seen or used in the main school, corridors, canteen or anywhere younger students are present. Use is permitted only in the Sixth Form area.

After-school activities: DfE guidance expects schools to be phone-free throughout the school day. Ely College applies the same expectation to clubs, rehearsals, performances and other activities on site after 3pm, because our safeguarding responsibilities apply whenever students are on site, and because these activities work best when students are fully engaged. Staff can always unlock a pouch if a student needs their phone.

Trips and visits: the policy applies on all college trips and visits. On minibus and coach trips, staff carry handheld magnets and give students the opportunity to unlock their pouches, as set out in the trip letter.

Legal context: DfE statutory guidance expects schools to be phone-free by default, with any other arrangement by exception only. Ofsted will look at the policy, how well staff and students understand it, and how consistently it is applied, within the behaviour and attitudes judgement. Phones are a banned item under this policy, so staff may search for them in line with *Searching, screening and confiscation*, without the use of force.

3. The expectation

Locked in. Bag on. Not seen, not heard, not used.

Every student in Years 7 to 11 must:

1. switch their phone off (not silent) before arriving at college
2. enter college through the Lantern gate or the Downham Road gate, which open at 8am
3. lock their phone, with any smartwatch or earbuds, in their pouch on arrival; smartwatches and earbuds must go in the pouch, not loose in the bag; staff at the gate check that the pouch is locked
4. always keep the locked pouch in their bag on site; it must not be in a pocket, blazer or hand
5. show the locked pouch whenever a member of staff asks
6. unlock the pouch only at a magnetic unlocking station as they leave site, or when a member of staff unlocks it

Students who do not bring a phone must still carry their pouch every day, locked and empty, and show it when asked. This keeps checks quick and fair. Students may choose not to bring a phone at all.

Arriving before 8am: Reception opens at 7.30am. Students who arrive before 8am lock their pouch, wait in Reception and work sensibly and quietly until the gates open at 8am.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Who	Responsible for
Governors / Trust	Approving the policy and monitoring its impact and fairness
Headteacher	Overall implementation and resourcing
AP for Behaviour & Culture	Policy ownership, duty rota for gates and unlocking stations, data monitoring, staff training
SLT on duty	Issuing spare pouches at the gates; responding to refusals and escalations, contacted via Bromcom or radio
Senior Tutors	Follow-up on repeat breaches, parent contact and meetings, support plans, decisions on charges
Tutors	Issuing pouches on 3 November and showing students how to lock and unlock them; the daily pouch check; reporting lost or broken pouches
Gate staff	Checking pouches are locked as students enter through the Lantern and Downham Road gates

Who	Responsible for
Behaviour team	Confiscating and logging phones from students sent to them, making sure confiscated phones are at Reception for collection 3pm to 4pm, and collecting spare pouches at the end of the day
Club and event leaders	Making sure pouches stay locked during after-school activities; unlocking a pouch if a student needs their phone
Trip leaders	Applying the policy off site; carrying a handheld magnet on minibuses and coach trips
All staff	Checking pouches on request, logging breaches on Bromcom and sending the student to the behaviour team, modelling phone-free behaviour
SENCo / Medical lead	Agreeing medical and SEND exceptions (with the DSL for safeguarding cases), issuing openable pouches, keeping the exceptions list current
Reception	Opening for early arrivals from 7.30am; holding confiscated phones and releasing them only to parents or carers, 3pm to 4pm; passing on urgent parent messages
Students	Bringing and locking the pouch every day, phone or no phone, and showing it when asked
Parents and carers	Supporting the policy, collecting confiscated phones from Reception, contacting college (not the child) during the day

Staff modelling: staff do not use personal phones in front of students in corridors, social spaces or lessons, except for professional or safety reasons, as set out in the Staff Code of Conduct.

5. Pouches: issue, ownership, loss and damage

- Every student receives a pouch in form on Tuesday 3 November 2026, free of charge. Pouches arrive unlocked. Tutors show students how to lock and unlock them, and students write their name on their pouch.
- The pouch remains college property. Students bring it every day, whether or not they bring a phone.
- Students must not tamper with, force open, cut, use magnets on, or swap pouches. Doing so is treated as a serious breach (Section 6).
- **Forgotten pouch:** the student tells the SLT member on duty at the gate and is given a spare pouch, which they lock as normal. At the end of the day they unlock it at an unlocking station and hand the spare pouch to the behaviour team at [location] before leaving. The behaviour team returns it to stock. Repeatedly forgetting is followed up by the Senior Tutor.
- **Lost or damaged pouch:** the student reports it to their tutor the same day and uses a spare pouch from SLT on arrival, returned to the behaviour team each afternoon, until a replacement is issued.

- Replacement charge for loss or deliberate damage: **£10**, payable via WisePay. The first replacement for genuine wear is free. Charges are waived or reduced where cost is a barrier; Senior Tutors decide case by case.
- Phones are brought to college at the owner's risk. The college is not liable for loss of or damage to a phone, except while the college holds it after confiscation.

6. Breaches and consequences

Any phone seen, heard or used, or any pouch found unlocked, is a breach. Classroom and duty staff do not confiscate. They log the breach on Bromcom and send the student to the behaviour team, who confiscate the phone, log it and make sure it is at Reception for collection. Confiscated phones are released only to a parent or carer, from Reception, between 3pm and 4pm.

Consequences are deliberately set at a high level. The system only works if every student keeps their pouch locked, and a consequence that felt worth the risk would undermine it for everyone.

Launch period: to help students get used to the routine, a first offence during the launch period leads to same-day collection. This is phased out over time. From January 01 2027, any offence leads to 7-day collection. Parents and carers will be told in advance.

Breach	Immediate action	Consequence
First offence during the launch period	Staff log it on Bromcom and send the student to the behaviour team, who confiscate and log the phone	Parent or carer collects the phone from Reception the same day, 3pm to 4pm
Second offence, or any offence after the launch period	As above	Parent or carer collects the phone from Reception after 7 days, 3pm to 4pm; Senior Tutor contacts home
Repeated offences	As above	7-day collection, plus a Senior Tutor meeting with parents; escalated under the Behaviour Policy
Refusing to go to the behaviour team, hand over a phone or show a pouch	Do not physically take anything; contact SLT on duty via Bromcom or radio	Escalated sanction under the Behaviour Policy
Tampering with, breaking or swapping a pouch	As first row	Counts as an offence above, plus replacement charge
Filming, photographing or sharing images of others	Contact SLT on duty via Bromcom or radio straight away; inform the DSL	Serious incident under the Behaviour Policy; possible suspension

Why 7 days: a 7-day period means the consequence is the same for every student, whatever day of the week the offence happens, and it always includes a weekend. For example, a phone confiscated on a Tuesday is collected the following Tuesday, 3pm to 4pm.

Forgetting a pouch is not a breach in itself: SLT issue a spare on arrival (Section 5).

If the 7th day falls within a holiday period then the phone can be collected by parents at the end of the final day of the half term or term. This will ensure that students will have access to their phones over the holiday period.

7. Exceptions

Exceptions are made only for medical, SEND or safeguarding reasons. Each one is agreed in writing, recorded on the central exceptions list and reviewed each term.

Reason	Example	Agreed by	Arrangement
Medical	A phone linked to a glucose monitor, noted in the Individual Healthcare Plan	SENCo or medical lead	Openable pouch; phone out only for the agreed medical use
SEND	An assistive app named in an EHCP or support plan that cannot run on a school device	SENCo	Openable pouch; phone out only for the agreed app
Safeguarding or young carer	A short, supervised contact arrangement with home	DSL	Pouch stays locked; contact happens in the house office, supervised by staff

There is no exception card. Staff who are unsure check the exceptions list on Bromcom / Provision Map or ask the behaviour team. Using an excepted phone for anything other than the agreed purpose is a breach under Section 6.

8. Contact during the day, and the end of the day

Parents and carers who need to reach their child during the day call the college office on [phone number] or email [address]. The office passes on urgent messages the same lesson.

Students who need to contact home (for example if they feel unwell) go to their house office, where a member of staff makes the call. Students who are unwell must not contact home themselves; all absences during the day are authorised through the college.

End of the day: the school day ends at 3pm. Most students unlock their pouch at a magnetic unlocking station as they leave.

Clubs, rehearsals and performances: students keep their pouch locked until the activity ends. The magnetic unlocking stations stay available until the site closes in the evening, so every student can unlock as they leave. Staff can unlock a pouch at any time if a student needs their phone, for example to arrange a lift home.

9. Searching, confiscation and safeguarding

Confiscation. Classroom and duty staff do not confiscate phones. They log the breach on Bromcom and send the student to the behaviour team at [location]. The behaviour team confiscates the phone, has it switched off, places it in a named envelope and logs it on Bromcom with the time and student name. They make sure it is at Reception for collection by a parent or carer between 3pm and 4pm. No one looks through a confiscated phone.

Searching. Because phones are banned on site, staff authorised by the Headteacher may search a student's outer clothing or bag for one, following *Searching, screening and confiscation*. Searches are carried out without force, with a second adult present, and recorded.

Looking at content. If staff believe a phone holds material that may cause harm, such as images of another student, they do not view, copy or delete it. They contact SLT on duty via Bromcom or radio so the phone can be secured, and inform the DSL immediately. The DSL decides on next steps, including police involvement where the content may be indecent.

Safeguarding concerns. Anything a student discloses about online harm is reported through MyConcern in the usual way.

10. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The AP for Behaviour & Culture reports to SLT every half term and to governors each term on:

- confiscations by year group, house and week, and repeat breaches by student
- lost, damaged and replaced pouches
- exceptions in place and their reviews
- breaches by students with SEND, Pupil Premium or a social worker, to check the policy is applied fairly
- staff and student voice, and parent feedback
- related behaviour data: online-related incidents, corridor and social-time behaviour

The policy is reviewed in July 2027, or sooner if DfE guidance changes.

Sources

- Managing mobile phones in school, The Key, updated 9 July 2026
- KCSIE 2026: statutory mobile phone guidance, Browne Jacobson, 13 July 2026
- The UK school mobile phone ban (2026), SchoolVoice

