CAMPBELL
COLLEGE

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MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Prepared: **June 2025**
Next Revision: **June 2027**

This policy applies to all pupils of Campbell College and to pupils from other schools who are taught at the College as part of our Sixth Form collaboration, whilst they are on College premises.

It covers the use of both personal mobile phones and other smart, internet-enabled devices.



What is the purpose of our Mobile Phone Policy?

Mobile phones are a dominant feature of modern society. They exert a powerful influence on the lives of young people. They bring many opportunities, but they also present challenges to individuals, to families and to schools.

Our young people are growing up in a digital world. It is our responsibility and aim as a College to develop in our pupils the ability and confidence to become skilled, responsible and resilient digital citizens.

Managing digital devices is difficult for everyone – for pupils, for teachers and for parents. We know that 'digital parenting' is one of the most challenging aspects of being a parent today. As adults, we know personally how hard it can be to balance our use of digital devices, or to avoid having our attention consumed by social media or other online activities. This challenge is even greater for our young people.

It is a challenge that we must face together, as a school, as parents and as young people.
The purpose of this Policy is to provide clear, research-based guidance to pupils, parents and staff, enabling us to work together to ensure a safe, respectful and focused learning environment and to develop good habits of safe, appropriate use of mobile phones and other devices that support learning and enhance relationships and wellbeing.

What does research tell us?

There is a great deal of current research around the potential and challenges of mobile phones and other personal devices in schools. Here are relevant links:

OECD: 'Students, digital devices and success' (2024)

Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement: 'Growing Up Online' (2023)

UNESCO: 'Technology in Education: A Tool on whose terms?' (2023)

DENI Guidance for Schools on Pupils' Personal Use of Mobile Phones and other similar devices during the school day (DENI 2024/14)

Some of the key recent research findings are:

- By the age of 12, 97% of children own a mobile phone.[1]
  Of course it remains parents' responsibility for deciding whether their child has a phone or not, and whether it is a smartphone.
- 93% of young people between 12 and 15 years old use social media and messaging Apps.[1]
- 29% of secondary school pupils (rising to 40% for Key Stage 4 pupils) reported mobile phones being used without permission in most of their lessons.[2]
- Screen time can displace positive activities.[3] Positive influences on wellbeing such as socialising, exercise and good sleep can all be displaced by screen time.
- The Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement found evidence that children and young people are spending much greater amounts of time online (as much as 7 hours per day at weekends and 4 hours on a school day).
- Both UNESCO and OECD have recognised that the use of digital devices for leisure during the school day can negatively impact pupils' academic performance.

[1] Children's Media Use and Attitudes Survey 2023 - Ofcom
[2] Department for Education (2023) National Behaviour Survey
[3] Royal College Paediatrics and Child Health (2019). The health impacts of screen time.

The College's Commitment

- To provide a safe, productive and distraction-free learning environment in all our classrooms and lessons, and throughout the College environment and school day.

- To promote your son's academic success and overall wellbeing by helping him focus on his learning, face-to-face relationships, social skills, sport and creative activities.

- To minimise the opportunities for inappropriate and harmful digital behaviour.

- To educate and inspire your son to become a confident, responsible and resilient digital citizen, able to be safe online.

- To utilise the positive opportunities provided by digital learning, for example continuing to utilise our Virtual Learning Environment, *Firefly*, and developing a digital learning strategy that keeps Campbell College at the forefront of using technology for learning.

- To communicate the Mobile Phone Policy clearly to pupils and parents and enforce it consistently and fairly.

- To support pupils who may need mobile phones or other technology for medical or special educational needs.

Parents' Commitment

- To support the College's mobile phone policy and its communication to pupils.

- To monitor and talk to your son about his mobile phone use and reinforce expectations of safe, appropriate mobile phone use at all times, including outside school.

- To avoid contacting your son directly during school hours and instead use Front of House for urgent communication.

- To support fair implementation and enforcement of the policy, including when this requires collection of a phone.

Pupils' Commitment

- To seek to understand the reasons for the College's mobile phone policy and follow its expectations and rules.

- To prioritise face-to-face relationships.

- To behave safely and responsibly online, reporting any concerns to a trusted adult at home or in school.

- To use mobile phones responsibly, if permitted to do so in a lesson.

What is the Policy and how will it work?

- Teachers and pupils have a right to teach and to learn in a school and classroom environment that is safe and free from interruptions or distractions from mobile phones and other digital devices not used for educational purposes.

- Pupils' wellbeing, face-to-face relationships and social skills will be prioritised throughout the school day.

To achieve these aims:

- The College recommends that pupils do not bring mobile phones to school.

- Where pupils, with the permission of their parents, choose to bring a mobile phone to school, they must be **switched off and out of sight between the hours of 8.40 and 3.30**.
  This includes classrooms, corridors, communal areas and outside.
  This includes **break and lunchtime**, whether inside or outside.

- Ear pods and head phones should not be worn on site.

- Where pupils choose to bring a mobile phone or other personal digital device to school, they do so at their own risk and accept responsibility for its security. The College cannot accept responsibility for any misplacement, loss or theft of mobile devices.

- Pupils must not, under any circumstances, take photos, videos or audio recordings of others. The only possible exception to this is if given permission by a teacher for educational purposes.
  The sharing of inappropriate content or cyberbullying will be treated as serious misconduct and may involve the PSNI or other external agencies.

Parental/Carer Communication

- Parents are asked to support their son's adherence to this policy by **not contacting him during the school day**. In case of emergency, parents needing to contact pupils can do so by calling Front of House and the message will be conveyed as quickly as possible.
  Likewise, if a pupil needs to contact a parent or carer urgently, he should ask at Front of House.

Implementation

- Tutors will instruct and remind pupils at First Commitments to ensure that, if they have a phone in school, it must be switched off.

- If a pupil is found to be using a mobile phone between 8.40 and 3.30 without permission, either
  - the pupil will be required to lock the phone in a secure pouch specifically designed for this purpose
  - the phone will be retained by a member of staff.

- Any member of staff has full permission to retain a mobile phone. This includes support staff and temporary teaching staff.

- If a pupil refuses to lock his phone or hand it over to a member of staff and/or is aggressive in their response, this will be deemed to be a breach of the Positive Behaviour Policy and sanctioned by no less than a Vice Principal Detention.

- If a phone is retained, it will be left with the Headmaster. It will be available for collection from the Headmaster's Secretary or from Front of House no earlier than 3.55pm on the day on which it was retained. If, for any reason, it cannot be delivered to Front of House by 3.55pm, or the pupil is unable to collect it, it will be available for collection the next working day.

- If a phone is secured in a phone pouch, this may only be released by the Headmaster or one of the Vice Principals, no earlier than 3.55pm that day, or else the next working day.

- If the same pupil's phone is retained or locked for a second time within a school term, it may only be collected by a parent or released by a parent meeting with the Headmaster, Vice Principal or Head of Key Stage, by arrangement.

- If the same pupil's phone is retained or locked more than twice within a school term, the matter will be addressed in a meeting between parents, the pupil and a member of Senior Leadership Team, during which agreed action will be taken. Only after that meeting will the phone be returned or released.

Exemptions

- Where a pupil has been given special permission to keep their phone with them for specific health-related or SEN-related reasons, they will be given a 'phone exemption card' and may only use the phone for designated purpose in classes.

Sixth Form

The Sixth Form experience at Campbell College should provide progression for pupils and preparation for adult life. In recognition of the relative maturity of Sixth Form pupils and to assist them to develop the skills of independence and self-regulation which will be required at university or in working life, the rules for Sixth Form pupils are adapted. The following rules recognise these differences but still enable Sixth Form pupils to model responsible use of devices to younger pupils.

- Year 13 and Year 14 pupils are permitted to use their mobile phones only in the Sixth Form Centre at break or lunchtime or during recreational periods.

- Year 13 and Year 14 pupils are permitted to use their mobile phones in the Sixth Form Study Hall, only for the following purposes:
  - they may be used to **access resources for assisting with study**, in which case pupils must work in areas allocated for this purpose
  - they may be used to listen to background music which does not detract from their ability to concentrate nor is audible and distracting to others. The phone should be kept out of sight.

  Sixth Formers need to recognise the need for, and demonstrate, maturity and self-control in ensuring that they use their phones responsibly. If they fail to do so, they will forfeit the privilege of using their device in the Study Hall. Phones being used improperly in the Study Hall will be subject to the same rules and sanctions as phones being used elsewhere on the campus.

- Outside the Sixth Form Centre and Study Hall, Year 13 and Year 14 must adhere to, and model, the same expected behaviour as the rest of the school. Phones must be switched off and out of sight.

These privileges may be removed if an individual pupil's academic performance or behaviour demonstrates a poor attitude to study or an inability to study whilst having access to his mobile phone.

Exams

Mobile phones, or any other smart devices, are not permissible in examination rooms, whether for external or internal examinations.

Review

The College will keep the implementation and effects of this policy under review. In doing so, the over-riding consideration will be pupil welfare and the promotion of effective learning.