



# South Dartmoor Community College

Executive Head teacher | Mrs J Veal  
Balland Lane | Ashburton | Devon | TQ13 7EW  
01364 652230 | [www.southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk](http://www.southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk)

*Empowering everyone to be the best they can be.*



11 February 2026

Dear Parent / Carer

## **Mobile Phone Policy Update – SDCC, a Smartphone Free School**

I am writing to update you following the message issued last week to school leaders by the Secretary of State for Education regarding mobile phone use in schools. As you may have seen in the press, the guidance reinforces the importance of creating calm, focused learning environments and highlights the growing concerns around the impact of mobile phones on learning, safety and well-being. She states:

*I have always been clear that mobile phones have no place in schools - I know many of you feel the same. But it is clear that the previous guidance did not deliver the clarity or consistency that schools need, or help enough in setting out for parents that this is a clear national position. That is why we have strengthened it to be explicit - all schools should be phone-free environments for the entire school day. That includes lessons, time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. It means, for example, it is not appropriate for phones to be used as calculators, or for research during lessons.*

As a school, we fully support the strengthening of national expectations around mobile phone use. We know that reducing distractions helps students concentrate better, engage more fully in lessons and maintain healthy social interactions throughout the school day.

In light of this updated national message we will be reaffirming our existing mobile phone expectations and strengthening the reinforcement of these from Monday 23 February:

1. Mobile phones must not be used during the school day, including lessons, break times and transitions between classes
2. Phones, if brought to school, should remain switched off and kept in bags from arrival until students leave the site. They must not be seen or heard at any point on site.
3. Any phone that is seen or heard during the school day (including while on the buses on our site at the end of the day) will be confiscated and kept for a week. We will contact parents/carers to make them aware of the situation and then again at the end of the five working day period of confiscation to ask them to collect the device. For safeguarding purposes, parents will be invited to pay a deposit to borrow a 'brick' phone if they are concerned about their child's travel home during this time.

Our policy regarding mobile phone use has therefore changed slightly; we have removed 'supervised and directed use' and changed the sanction for being caught not following policy. It should be stated that the majority of students follow the policy perfectly. However, we have chosen to take this step to reinforce expectations with respect to Government directives and to be able to say that we are a mobile phone free environment. This is in line with many schools locally and nationally, and supports the many parents who have had conversations with us about banning them altogether. We hope that this will also support the growing number of parents choosing not to allow young people to own phones until they are much older or those who are having challenging conversations at home about mobile phone usage and routines.

Please be assured that if you need to reach your child during the day, the office will always assist. Likewise, if your child needs to contact home they can do so via the office. Please also know that we are revisiting practices in school to make sure that no child is disadvantaged by not having access to a phone. For example, currently students may access their phone while supervised to check their timetables. From after half term, all students will be issued with a pocket-sized version, which they can keep in their blazers. To this end, we welcome all feedback as to how we can help you, as parents and carers, to support this policy and the national agenda around mobile phone use for young people.

Finally, we wish to remind you that phones and all other personal property remains the responsibility of students and we cannot be held liable for any damage or loss, particularly to smartphones in the light of new guidance confirming they should not be on site.

The Secretary of State's message highlighted concerns around distraction, lost learning time and the effects of constant digital engagement on young people's well-being. By working together, school and families can help our students make positive choices that focus more deeply on learning and strengthen face to face relationships. We appreciate your continued support in helping us maintain a common purpose to our school environment. If you have any questions about the updated expectations, please do not hesitate to get in touch [enquiries@southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk)

Kind regards

Mr Dan Vile  
Assistant head teacher

---

Truth   Respect   Equality   Excellence