



26<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Dear Parent / Carer,

We have noticed that there has been an increase in students using their mobile phones and headphones on the College premises, especially in lessons. This is unacceptable and is a breach of the College rules. It also presents a significant concern in relation to the safety of staff and students. Therefore, in line with schools nationally and locally, I am writing to inform you that we intend that these devices will not be permitted to be used, seen or heard at any time on the College site from 1st September 2023.

### **Safety is our priority**

Our behaviour policy has been clear for several years and states that **'we recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping students to feel safe and secure. However, we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in College and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others.'** We know that from a safety perspective, some parents want their children to bring a phone to college and many of our students have their bus tickets stored on them. We also recognise that some students use their mobile phones for medical purposes such as managing their diabetes and hearing aids, as well as translation in the classroom. However mobile phones are a big distraction for many of our students and result in them not focusing fully on learning in lessons. The temptation to use social media, take photos or record videos is too great for many and this has resulted in the college setting clear expectations for September 2023.

### **What if I need to contact my child in an emergency?**

We wish to reassure parents and carers that students will be able to use college phones to contact home when an emergency arises and we will always provide access to phones in private settings such as offices when necessary. Furthermore, parents can contact the College in the case of an emergency either through the college phone line: **0161 336 2219** or email: [info@dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk](mailto:info@dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk)

### **What if my child uses a mobile phone to monitor a health condition?**

Students with medical needs that require the use of mobile phones will be contacted directly to discuss how procedures to support them will work.

### **Why is this being brought in?**

The main reasons we restrict the use of mobile phones/electronic devices in College is to ensure learning is not disrupted and students can focus on their studies whilst feeling safe. This will help ensure our safeguarding measures are robust with regards to potential unwanted filming or recording of students and staff without permission, as well as reducing the opportunity for potential cyber-bullying of students. It is also important to allow young people a break from technology and remove the pressure of being constantly connected whilst in College. It is for these reasons that from **1st September 2023**, mobile devices will not be permitted to be used, seen or heard at any time during the college day. This will be referred to as a **'Gate-to-Gate'** policy.

### **What is a 'Gate-to-Gate' policy?**

This will mean that devices brought into College must be switched off and left in students' bags at all times during the College day, including on the playground. Mobile devices must be away as soon as they enter the College site and remain so until they are completely off-site. Students must ensure mobile phones are switched to silent, including vibrations, so they are not seen or heard.

### **What if a child uses their phone on the College site?**

If a mobile phone or headphones are seen or heard at any point during the College day, the student will be asked to hand their device over to a member of staff. Family members such as parents can collect the device from the college at the end of the day. Parents can collect all devices between 3pm – 3:45pm, they must provide the child's name and demonstrate their relationship to the child through a form of identification. If they are unable to do this, the phone can be collected the following day from reception by parent or student.

We appreciate that some students use their phone at the end of the day to access their bus pass. If a student's phone is confiscated, parents/carers will need to collect their child's phone and their child on the same day or ask their child to make alternative arrangements to get home from college and the parent or child can collect the phone the following day.

### **What if a child does not hand in their phone?**

If a student refuses to hand over their device, a senior member of staff will be called to collect the device. If a student refuses to hand over their mobile phone in line with our expectations, their actions will be followed up with sanctions in line with our behaviour policy.

### **How will students prepare for this change?**

We understand that this is a significant change in culture and wish to prepare students. To support students a phased approach will be implemented to ensure expectations are understood.

#### **Phase 1 (From Monday 5th June 2023):**

A complete ban on wireless and wired earphones/ headphones. A ban on mobile phones being used in all classrooms and teaching spaces.

#### **Phase 2 (From Monday 3rd July 2023):**

A complete ban on all electronic devices being used inside the college building, including but not limited to corridors, dining areas, social spaces and Homebases.

#### **Phase 3 (1st September 2023):**

Introduction of a 'Gate-to-Gate' policy where devices brought into College must be switched off and left in students' bags at all times during the College day. If a mobile phone or headphone is seen or heard at any point during the College day, the student will be asked to hand their device over to a member of staff.

Staff will model our new expectations by only using mobile phones for sanctioned work-related purposes in the presence of students during the College day.

### **What will happen on Monday 5th June 2023?**

Please be aware that from **Monday 5th June 2023 (Phase 1)**, if a mobile phone is used or visible the student will be challenged and expected to hand the device over to a member of staff. The mobile phone will be placed in an envelope with the student's name, year and form written on the front. The mobile phone will be placed in a sealed year group-specific box at reception, then returned to the student by a member of the Senior Leadership Team at 3.00 pm in the Theatre. The mobile phone will not be returned to the student by reception staff.

These actions are in line with our current behaviour policy which states that '**The College reserves the right to ask students to hand in phones for safekeeping to ensure both staff and students are safeguarded against inappropriate use. Disciplinary action will be taken against students who fail to comply.**' If a student refuses to hand over their mobile phone in line with our expectations, their actions will be followed up with sanctions in line with our current behaviour policy.

Denton Community College is committed to improving the learning experience as well as the well-being of all students. During recent student voice surveys it was very clear that our student body was very supportive of

**HEADTEACHER:** Mr G Rule

the College's expectations concerning mobile phones and headphones. They felt that the safety and well-being of students was supportive with these expectations applied consistently across the College.

Assemblies to all our students in Years 7 to 10 have communicated our expectations moving forward. We ask that you discuss this policy with your child to ensure they are clear regarding the steps we are taking and the consequences of not meeting our expectations. We appreciate your support in this matter and thank you in advance for helping to ensure the College's expectations are consistently upheld. We are confident these actions will improve the engagement, attainment, safety and well-being of all students.

Yours sincerely,



Mr James Haslam  
Deputy Headteacher



Mrs Candice Wilson  
Assistant Headteacher



Mr James Day  
Associate Senior Leader