



Heathfield

Community College and Sixth Form

Pride . Ambition . Community

1 July 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

MAINTAINING A PHONE-FREE ENVIRONMENT AT HEATHFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

As part of our ongoing commitment to provide the best possible environment for your child's academic success, focus, and overall well-being, we are writing to inform you of our new policy regarding mobile phones at College from September 2026.

Government guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) strongly supports schools in eliminating the distractions caused by mobile phones. **The Department for Education (DfE) expects schools to implement a policy whereby pupils do not have access to their mobile phone throughout the school day including during lessons, time between lessons, breaktime and lunchtime.**

In line with this national directive, Heathfield Community College will operate a strictly phone-free environment across all year groups using the Yondr pouch system from September. The appendix to this letter provides details on how this will work on a daily basis.

Why We Use Yondr

The Yondr program utilises a simple, secure pouch that stores a phone to ensure our students remain fully engaged in their lessons and interact positively with their peers. We have tested other models and found they are of inferior quality, security and durability.

Cost to Parents

There will be no cost to parents as the college will fully fund the first year of implementation. Following that we will assess the impact and do all we can to avoid adding further cost for parents.

School Opening Times

From September the gates will be open at the front and back of the college at 8.15am. All students will be expected to wait outside of the gates and not come on site until this point. This slight adjustment to process means we will manage the placement of phones in pouches as students enter the site ensuring a clarity about the site being phone-free from the point of entry.



Distinguished School



Tel: (01435) 866066 e-mail: office@heathfieldcc.co.uk

Cade Street, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 8RJ Website: www.heathfieldcc.co.uk

Headteacher: Ms Caroline Barlow B.A. (Hons)

Contacting Your Child

Should any parent or carer need to contact their child during the school day, please contact the main school office on **01435 866066**. Please do not attempt to contact them directly via their mobile device. If a student needs to leave the school early (for example, for a medical appointment), they will be permitted to unlock their pouch when they leave the school building.

We appreciate your full support in embedding the Yondr program here at Heathfield. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Head of Year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Barlow', written in a cursive style.

MS C BARLOW
Headteacher

Appendix:

Daily Routine & Expectations

We expect all students to be fully compliant with the Pouch routine every day:

- **Arrival:** Upon entering the college grounds, students must place their switched-off mobile phone inside their personally assigned pouch. The top of the phone must be showing so staff can check that it is turned off. A staff member will lock the pouch and hand it back to the student.
- **During the School Day:** The pouch must remain locked. Students keep possession of their locked pouch securely inside their school bag for the duration of the school day. Please note that the college cannot accept liability for any accidental damage to devices kept inside bags.
- **Departure:** At the end of the school day, students can unlock their pouches at the designated unlocking stations located near the school exits. Students must lock their pouches again after retrieving their phone, as leaving them open may damage the locking pin.
- There will be an additional unlocking station at the front of college for anyone who has forgotten to unlock their pouch.

Forgotten Pouches

All students must have their pouch with them every day, irrespective of whether or not they own a mobile phone.

- **Forgotten Pouches:** Students must disclose to duty staff at the student or rear entrance if they have forgotten their pouch. At this point, the phone must be handed over to staff and can be collected by the student at the end of the school day.

Care of Pouches, Misuse, and Sanctions

As our students are already familiar with the college culture, we expect the highest standards of responsibility.

- **Damaged or Lost Pouches:** If a student loses, vandalises, or deliberately damages their pouch, a replacement fee of £20 will be charged to parents/carers via Arbor. This replacement is an essential equipment item requirement for attending the college. Damage includes any signs that the physical integrity of the pouch has been compromised (whether intentional or unintentional), as determined by college leadership or Yondr staff. This fee also applies if a pouch requires replacement due to a damaged locking pin from being left open.
- **Device Confiscation:** If a student is found using a mobile phone, or has a phone that is not securely locked in their pouch during the school day, it will be immediately confiscated and placed in a secure safe. A parent or carer will be required to come to the college in person to collect the phone; the student will not be authorised to collect it on their behalf.
- **Refusal and Behavioural Sanctions:** Should a student refuse to place their phone in the pouch, they will be held at the College entrance until either, (a) they place their phone in their pouch, or (b) a parent/carers attends the College to collect the phone. No student will be allowed into the College in possession of a mobile phone not locked within a pouch.