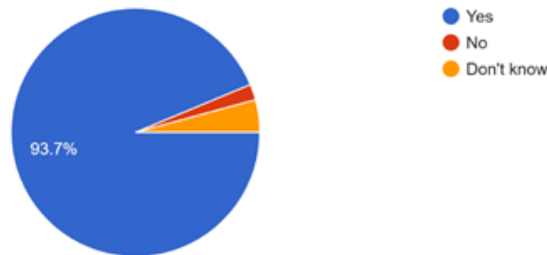


27th March 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you to all who contributed to our recent parent survey. We valued every submission, and every comment has been read. Responses were overwhelmingly positive: it was heartening to read your messages of support for the school, our staff and to hear the impact that you feel we have on your daughters. We all work really hard to give all the girls the best education and experiences we can - and whilst we don't always get it right every time, we do strive to be the best we can be, and to give the best we can give.

Would you recommend this school to another parent?
589 responses



Of course, there were some areas that were of concern to some individual parents, but very few common themes can be identified. People's views on education and what matters most to them, much like views on parenting, can be very different - and it can be impossible to accommodate everything that parents wish for.

There are two strands in the comments, and both had less than a handful of mentions. Nonetheless, we do like to assure that your views are heard and are appreciated, and I would like to show you that in these two areas – information on trips and mobile phone policy – we have either already acted, or changes are in the works.

Trips

Parents were unanimously highly appreciative of the very wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and trips on offer. As a result of the volume of opportunities, some families were keen to be able to 'look ahead/plan ahead' in terms of managing that. We have added a list to our website with planned trips in each year group and notional costs of each. This link will take you directly to the new section with the list:

<https://www.folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk/parents-and-students/trips-and-visits/#Costs>

The whole page is worth a read and might answer some questions you may have.

Please note, plans can *and do* change - as can costs! We are not the sort of school that turns down an enthusiastic teacher who has a new idea for an educational, broadening experience for the girls because it wasn't published on a list. Also, circumstances and staffing availability change – I am very aware that a trip that is very oversubscribed one year can barely be viable the next.

So, with the caveats that the list is not set in stone, and not every child can go on every trip, it does give an idea of what's 'normal' for FSG to allow parents and carers to plan ahead.

A timely reminder too that, whilst trips can cost financially, the opportunities on site - like the climbing, archery, mountain biking, escape room etc are entirely free. This summer we are looking to introduce Stand up paddle boarding to that mix! Other activities like the Year 7/8 outdoor cinema & camp, or from Sept the CCF, are offered on a pay what you can basis.

Trips come with a cost, and are time consuming to organise, but they are very much part of the ethos of FSG. It was cheering to read that they are valued so highly by our parents and students.

Mobile Phones

This is a very hot topic in the media, and rightly so - unfettered access to the internet is clearly not without consequence. However, it is clear that the majority of parents want their child to have a mobile phone - if, for nothing else, security on longer journeys to/from school. Some parents will only consider old style 'brick phones'; others don't - and have already purchased smart phones for their child long before they ever arrive here! It is an inconvenient truth then that many/most girls have smartphones on the school site and that we have to 'police' that.

Some schools have invested in pouches that students lock phones away in for the school day. Some students of course 'game' that by bringing an old phone in to lock away leaving them with their good phone! The pouches are expensive - schools can pass that cost onto parents as part of school uniform/equipment lists; others just absorb the costs. Pouches though do nothing to change the culture towards phones, and at 3.30 students are straight back on them dissecting the school day and its events.

We take a different approach and have invested, not in pouches but on alternatives to hopefully change the culture of the children **all the time**, rather than just the culture **when at school**.

So, we've built a huge extra-curricular programme here at the school to offer that alternative activity and provide the girls with an opportunity to find their thing and find their tribe – in the real world. We have a massive CCF contingent, DofE Award programme, opportunities in the performing arts, an escape room, archery, mountain biking trail, climbing wall, radio station etc . Everything is oversubscribed and the girls aren't on their phones because they are out and about and active with friends. They really do sign up, take part and join in in their droves.

At school we have a **never used, seen or heard** policy on phones and that works well. The money saved by not buying pouches has been used in the above provision instead and whilst I do not claim that girls do not use their phones, ever or at all, I do consider that we have helped them to find a good, healthy balance. I can also attest as someone who walks the school day in, day out, that seeing phones is rare and becoming even rarer - but we don't have eyes everywhere! At the heart of the school vision and ethos is a desire to create a curriculum not just for passing exams, but for life. A life well lived, not just watching other people online – but instead creating our own adventures and opportunities - and the girls have risen to that with gusto.

We have in the past allowed girls to use their devices in occasional lessons - they can be brilliant resources - but we are now looking to make this extremely rare indeed, and to highlight in advance the very few times throughout their school career where they may be used. On school trips for example, we do allow students the odd photo opportunity to record moments and memories made with friends - so perhaps 5 minutes photo opportunity under teacher supervision - but then it is phones away and back to living in the moment.

We'll shortly publish an updated mobile phone policy that will identify the very rare projects within the school curriculum where phones may be used to support learning. Across all year groups and all subjects, these will be very few and far between and girls will normally simply follow **never used, seen or heard!**

Mr Mark Lester

Principal