



# Ringwood School

## Acceptable Use – Mobile Technologies Policy

<b>Policy Name</b>	Acceptable Use – Mobile Technologies
<b>Date of Current Policy</b>	February 2024
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<b>Authorised By</b>	Leanne Symonds, Headteacher and the Student Welfare Governing Committee
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<b>Review Date</b>	February 2026
<b>Rationale for Policy</b>	To share and enforce expectations of acceptable mobile technology use by students on School site and whilst representing the School

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Registered in England and Wales Registration Number: 7552519

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## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The widespread ownership of mobile phones and smart devices among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile technologies are used responsibly at school. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile technologies can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as safety to and from school) can continue to be enjoyed by students.
- 1.2 The previous policy has had to be updated due to technological advancements allowing parents and carers to purchase phones at a relatively low cost that provide their children with unlimited internet access and 4G.
- 1.3 With the development of 4G, students are able to circumnavigate the controls that Ringwood School and Hampshire put in place. This results in students accessing social network sites, age-inappropriate sites and generally unsuitable websites – potentially during school hours. Due to this Ringwood School cannot currently guarantee that students are technologically “safe” when on the school site. This is something we need to ensure.
- 1.4 Ringwood School has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile technologies that provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile technologies during school hours.
- 1.5 Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to Ringwood School.
- 1.6 The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile technologies also applies to students during school visits and extra-curricular activities both on and off the school site.
- 1.7 There is no pre-requisite that when students attend Ringwood School that they must have a mobile phone. Students at Ringwood School do not need to have a mobile phone.

## **2. Rationale**

Ringwood School recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used appropriately.

### **2.1 Student safety to and from school**

Personal safety and security is of the utmost importance to Ringwood School for its students and staff. The school accepts that parents and carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child on their way to and from school.

### **2.2 Student safety online**

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Ringwood School places the utmost importance on e-safety and regularly delivers information in an engaging and appropriate manner to all students. Despite this, social norms and social pressures are seeing an increased use of mobile phones through the day.

With the increased use of 4G and children having unlimited access to the internet with few parental controls set, students are accessing inappropriate sites and apps. Students are able to access social media nearly every hour as they change lessons. This is unhealthy and develops a reliance on these sites.

### 2.3 Impact on learning

Ringwood School recognises that when used appropriately, mobile phones can effectively enhance learning in our classrooms.

However, research from the London School of Economics (2015) shows that when mobile phones are banned in schools grades are improved by 6% as they “cause distraction, reduce productivity and are detrimental to learning”.

### 2.4 Impact on health

Alongside this we need to address the impact that mobile technology is having on our students both emotionally and socially.

The use of mobile phones can limit the amount of verbal communication face to face. We recognise that talking and interacting face to face with friends is an important part of social and linguistic development and should be encouraged whenever possible; especially in free time outside of lessons.

Studies reveal that the risk of hearing loss increases as sound is played louder and for longer durations.

Eye surgeons also warn against “screen sightedness”. Mobile phones are causing sight problems to soar. Rates of short sightedness among young people have increased dramatically due to screen time and mobile phone usage.

## 3. Responsibility

3.1 The DfE states that “all schools can ban pupils bringing mobile phones into school, but should set this out clearly in a written policy”.

3.2 It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

3.3 The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use / misuse of those capabilities.

3.4 Students with 4G on their phones are able to circumvent the Hampshire restrictions on internet use. Therefore, whilst at school, students with unlimited contracts, 4G and no

- parental controls are able to access any resources on the internet. Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring age-appropriate controls are applied to mobile phones.
- 3.5 Parents and carers should be aware that if their child takes a mobile phone to school, it is assumed that household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use whilst at school or to and from the school site.
- 3.6 Parents and carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, school reception remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

#### **4. Acceptable Uses**

- 4.1 Mobile phones should be switched off and kept out of sight at all times when students are on school site and on school trips. The exception to this is as a tool for learning – see 4.4, or as a health care need (this must be pre-agreed by the medical team and the student's Head of Year)
- 4.2 Sixth form students are permitted to use their mobile phones in the sixth form building when not in lessons, however, their phones are not to be seen when walking around the main school site.
- 4.3 Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.
- 4.4 Ringwood School recognises the importance of emerging technologies present in modern mobile phones e.g. camera and video recording, internet access, MP3 and MP4 playback, blogging etc. Teachers may wish to utilise these functions to aid teaching and learning and students may have the opportunity to use their mobile phones on occasions in the classroom. On these occasions, students may use their phones in the classroom with the express permission of the class teacher. The use of a personal mobile phone in one lesson for a specific purpose does not mean blanket usage is then acceptable in future lessons in that or a different subject.
- 4.5 Staff are able to use mobile phone devices around the school site as part of normal working practice in conjunction with their professional role.

#### **5. Unacceptable Uses and Inappropriate Conduct**

- 5.1 Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones and/or smart watches or devices should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, access social media, access the internet, take photos or videos or use any other application during school hours.
- 5.2 Students will not be allowed to listen to music through their mobile phones / MP3 players in any lessons.

- 5.3 Headphones are not required in school, and therefore they should not be on display at any time.
- 5.4 Mobile phones and smart watches/devices are banned from all examinations. Students are expected to leave their mobile phones switched off in their bags, before entering the exam room. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone or smart device during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.
- 5.5 The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone/smart device must be switched off at all times and not used to send images or files to other mobile phones.
- 5.6 Mobile phones must be switched off; not on silent or vibrate. Mobile phones should not disrupt the learning of any student.
- 5.7 Smart watches may be worn, but whilst the student is on site it must only be used as a watch (ie. to tell the time); if it is used for any other reason then sanctions will apply (see 7.1)
- 5.8 Using mobile phones/smart devices to bully and threaten other students will not be tolerated. Cyber bullying is not tolerated at Ringwood School. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable, regardless of whether "consent" was given.
- 5.9 No member of the Ringwood School community should use their phone to take photos or videos of other people.
- 5.10 It is also unacceptable to upload these photos to social media or websites.
- 5.11 The transmission of violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images is a criminal offence.
- 5.12 Similarly "sexting" is also a criminal offence. As such the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police in any incidents of sexting.
- 5.13 Students should have their mobile technologies secure inside bags (or inside blazer pockets) prior to arriving at school in the morning.
- 5.14 During PE lessons, students will have the opportunity to hand their switched off mobile phones/smart devices over to teachers. These will be stored in a separate locked area away from the communal changing. Staff members are not responsible for phones that are left in the communal changing areas (this includes the school changing rooms located on the school site and those situated in the Ringwood Health and Leisure Centre).

## **6. Theft or damage**

- 6.1 Students should mark their mobile phone/smart device clearly with their name
- 6.2 Students who bring a mobile phone to school should leave it safely in their bag when they arrive at school. Theft rarely occurs at Ringwood School, but we encourage students to reduce the risk of theft by keeping their phone well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.
- 6.3 Mobile phones found in school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed in to reception.

- 6.4 The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones or smart watches
- 6.5 The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones or smart watches stolen or damaged whilst travelling to and from school.
- 6.6 It is strongly advised that students use passwords / pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones. Students must keep these passwords / pin numbers confidential.

## **7. Sanctions**

- 7.1 Students who infringe the rules set out in this document (i.e. if their phone is seen or heard, or if their smart watch is used for anything other than telling the time) will have their phone/smart device confiscated by a member of staff.
- 7.2 Students must hand over their phone/smart device, switched off, immediately when requested. Refusal to hand over a phone/smart device will be sanctioned as defiance.
- 7.3 For the first offence, students will have their phone/smart device confiscated and the student may collect their phone/smart device from student reception at the end of the day (3.00pm).
- 7.4 Reception will record on a checklist when a phone/smart device is handed in. This will be inputted onto Arbor by G&A admin support.
- 7.5 On a second occasion, a leadership detention (90mins on a Friday after school) will be set and parents will be informed. Students may collect their phone/smart device on the day of confiscation at 3.00pm after parents have given consent for the student to have their phone/smart device returned.
- 7.6 The email to parents/carers to notify of the Leadership DT will be sent automatically through Arbor.
- 7.7 Any subsequent misuse of the phone/smart device will require a parent to come to school to collect the mobile phone, as well as the setting of a Leadership detention.
- 7.8 The sanctions will be reset every term.
- 7.9 As set out in previous sections, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged serious incident being referred to the police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified if this does not present a safeguarding risk.

## **8. Links to other Policies**

- Behaviour and Statement of Behaviour Principles Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Prevention of Bullying Policy
- Student Acceptable Use IT policy
- Suspensions and Permanent Exclusion Policy