



Ringwood School

Student Smart Device Policy

Policy Name	Student Smart Device Policy
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Rationale for Policy	To share and enforce expectations of acceptable smart device use by students on School site and whilst representing the School

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1. Introduction and aims

1.1 At Ringwood School, our policy aims to:

- Ensure our environment is smart device-free by default
- Ensure the safe, responsible and lawful use of smart devices, where applicable
- Provide clear guidelines for the use of smart devices for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection, behaviour and the acceptable use of IT and smart devices by staff

1.2 This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by smart devices in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Risk of theft, loss or damage
- Appropriate use of technology for learning purposes

1.3 This policy applies to students when they are on school site, but also during school visits and extra-curricular activities both on and off the school site.

1.4 This policy meets the requirements of section 36 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s mobile phone guidance (June 2026) and behaviour guidance (February 2024). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy includes Keeping Children Safe in Education, which sets out the expectation that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

- 2.1.1 All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are required to actively enforce this policy and challenge any breach of smart device restrictions immediately and consistently.
- 2.1.2 Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy.
- 2.1.3 The Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral is responsible for monitoring the policy every two years (or earlier if government guidance changes), reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.
- 2.1.4 If requested, staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of smart devices.
- 2.1.5 The Student Welfare Governors Committee is responsible for approving this policy and for reviewing any changes made to this policy.
- 2.1.6 Staff use of smart devices is covered in our 'Staff Acceptable Use Policy'. Staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. There may be occasions where it is appropriate for a member of staff to use a mobile phone or similar device to undertake a work task, for example to issue rewards and sanctions, to register their class using Arbor, or to use multi-factor authentication.

2.2 Parents/carers

- 2.2.1 The decision to provide mobile technology to a child is made by parents/carers.
- 2.2.2 It is the responsibility of parents/carers to understand the capabilities of the technology they have provided and its potential use/misuse.
- 2.2.3 Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring age-appropriate controls are applied to smart devices given to their child.
- 2.2.4 Parents/carers have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of smart devices and should reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with smart device use and the benefits of a smart device-free environment.
- 2.2.5 In an emergency, parents/carers can contact their child during the school day by calling main school reception; a message will then be passed on to the student. If a student's mobile phone or prohibited smart device is seen, heard or used because parents/carers have tried to make contact during the school day then our usual sanctions will apply (see section 5).
- 2.2.6 Parents/carers are reminded that if a student becomes unwell during the school day, the student should go to Medical. The School Nurse will contact parents/carers to arrange collection from school if required; students should not contact parents/carers themselves using their own mobile technology. If a student's mobile phone or prohibited smart device is seen, heard or used in this way then our usual sanctions will apply (see section 5).

3. Use of smart devices by students

- 3.1 The DfE's 'Mobile phones in schools' guidance (June 2026) states that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default and that the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (for example the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video) throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime, should be prohibited.
- 3.2 From September 2026, students in Year 7-11 are only allowed to bring non-smartphones onto school site. A non-smartphone is a phone that does not have internet access and should not have a camera.
Procedures and sanctions for not adhering to this rule are outlined in 5.2.
- 3.3 At Ringwood School, student's non-smartphones should be switched off and not used during the school day. Students should not use their mobile phones during lessons; in the time between lessons; in the time before tutor (after they have arrived on school site); at breaktimes; at lunchtimes; when they are using the toilet facilities; when they are in the school changing rooms; or in the time after the final school bell (3pm) when they may have left their classroom but are still on school site. Students are not permitted to bring a smart device onto school site at any time.
- 3.4 The only exceptions to this are where there is a safeguarding need where a third party has dictated the need for a smartphone and evidence has been provided and/or where an app on a smartphone is required for a health care need (see 3.9). Students who require access to a

smartphone for defined safeguarding reasons will not have access to their smartphone whilst on site during the school day.

- 3.5 Items to help parents/carers track their child's whereabouts, such as AirTags, are allowed if kept in a student's bag at all times.
- 3.6 Points 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 also apply when students are on school visits and engaging in extra-curricular activities both on and off the school site.
- 3.7 Sixth-form students are permitted to bring smart devices onto school site and are allowed access during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of smart devices for other students. Therefore, they are only permitted to use their smart devices out of sight of younger students in the sixth form building or when working in the Stables, and only when not in lessons. Sixth form students' smart devices must not be used, seen or heard when walking around the main school site. Misuse of smart devices by students in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.
- 3.8 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 guard students against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.
- 3.9 Ringwood School recognises that some students may wish to use their own personal mobile technology to monitor a health condition, for example students with diabetes may use a smart device to monitor their blood sugar. Use of smart technology in this way will be approved on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, students or parents/carers should contact the School Nurse and the student's Head of Year via email (medical@ringwood.hants.sch.uk) or telephone (01425475000).
- 3.10 If a student needs to contact home (for example to request that a forgotten PE kit is brought into school, that money is put onto their lunch card, or to request permission to attend an after-school club), then the student should go to Student Reception, where a member of staff will support them. The member of staff may allow the student to briefly use their non-smartphone to contact home, under their supervision, or they may contact home on their behalf.
- 3.11 Year 7 students will receive education on e-safety through the curriculum as part of their ITaCS lessons. Students in Year 8 -11 will receive education on staying safe in the online world as part of their PSHE lessons. All students will receive regular reminders about e-safety through the pastoral programme (eg. through assemblies and tutor activities, for example during Internet Safety Week).
- 3.12 As outlined in government guidance (Behaviour in Schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff, February 2024), it is the responsibility of parents/carers to supervise students' use of mobile technology outside of school. Ringwood School strongly advises parents/carers to check the legal age that students must be to access or use certain apps (particularly social media apps), games and websites. It is the view of the School that children should not be permitted to access platforms where they are not at the minimum age. If a child below the minimum age does access a platform and encounters or provokes an incident that affects the school culture (for example, behaviour that poses a threat or causes harm to another student, and/or could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school, where the student is identifiable as a member of the school, or if the behaviour could adversely affect

the reputation of the school), then sanctions in line with our behaviour policy may be applied.

4. Use of smartwatches by students

- 4.1 The DfE's '**Mobile phones in schools**' guidance (June 2026) prohibits the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (for example the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video) throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.
- 4.2 Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks and many have the ability to record audio and/or video. We recognise that many smartwatches can be restricted by parents/carers and may not have smart capabilities if they are not connected to a smartphone, however we do not have the capacity in school to check the connectivity of every smartwatch, and so, in line with DfE guidance (June 2026), smartwatches of any kind may **not** be worn by students at Ringwood School in Years 7-11. If they are seen, used or heard on school site at any time, sanctions will apply (see section 5).

5. Misuse and sanctions

5.1 Misuse

- 5.1.1 Unless express permission is granted in advance by a member of staff, student's non-smartphones should not be seen, used or heard on school site. Students are not permitted to bring smart devices (including smartwatches) onto school site at any time.
- 5.1.2 Students will not be allowed to listen to music through their mobile technology in any lessons.
- 5.1.3 Headphones are not required or permitted in school and therefore they should not be on display at any time.
- 5.1.4 Mobile technology (including smartwatches) is banned from all examinations. Students are expected to leave their (non-smart) mobile technology 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 be reported to the exam board and the exam board will determine a sanction. This can include a disqualification for the paper sat in the exam where the device was found, or disqualification from all exams overseen by the exam board.
- 5.1.5 Non-smart mobile phones must be switched off; not on silent or vibrate. Mobile phones should not disrupt the learning of any student.
- 5.1.6 Using mobile phones/smart devices to bully and threaten other students will not be tolerated. Cyberbullying 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. Our response to bullying, including cyberbullying, is outlined in detail in our Prevention of Bullying Policy.
- 5.1.7 No member of the Ringwood School community should use a mobile phone to take photos or videos of other people.
- 5.1.8 It is also unacceptable to upload these photos to social media or websites.

- 5.1.9 The transmission of violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images is a criminal offence.
- 5.1.10 Similarly, “sexting” and “upskirting” are also criminal offences. As such the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police in any incidents of this nature.
- 5.1.11 Students should have their non-smart mobile technology secure inside bags (or inside blazer pockets) prior to arriving at school in the morning.
- 5.1.12 During PE lessons, students will have the opportunity to hand their switched off non-smart mobile phones over to teachers. These will be stored in a separate locked area away from the communal changing. Staff members are not responsible for mobile technology that is 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).

5.2 Sanctions

- 5.2.1 Students who infringe the rules set out in this document (i.e. if a smart device is brought onto school site by a student, or if non-smart mobile technology is used, seen or heard) will have their mobile phone/smart device confiscated by a member of staff.
- 5.2.2 Headteachers, or staff they authorise, have a statutory power to search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the student is in possession of a prohibited item as set out in legislation or any item identified in the school rules as an item that may be searched for. Mobile phones/smart devices are items that the school may search for. Please see our Behaviour Policy for more detailed information on our process for searching students.
- 5.2.3 Students must hand over their non-smart mobile phone/smart device, switched off, immediately when requested. Refusal to hand over a non-smart mobile phone or smartwatch will be sanctioned as defiance and result in a leadership detention being issued. Refusal to hand over a smart mobile phone will likely lead to suspension from School.
- 5.2.4 It is part of our expectations of working in our Inclusion Room that students hand their non-smart mobile phone in to Student Reception at the start of any day working in that room.
- 5.2.5 DfE guidance states that Headteachers are backed by the DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for whatever length of time they deem proportionate. If a student is found in possession of a smart mobile phone on school site (or whilst on a school trip, or extra-curricular activity), the device will be confiscated and will not be returned to the student for a period of six school weeks (excluding holidays). The device will be stored in the school safe during this time and will not be returned until this period is up. Parents/carers will be informed and will be invited to collect the smart phone at the end of the confiscation period.
- 5.2.6 If a student’s smartwatch or non-smart mobile phone is seen, used, or heard on school site, for the first offence in a term, students will have the device confiscated and the student may collect it from student reception at the end of the day (3.00pm).
- 5.2.7 Reception will record on a checklist when a non-smart mobile phone or smartwatch is handed in by a member of staff. This will be inputted onto Arbor.

- 5.2.8 On a second occasion in a term, a leadership detention (3.00-4.30pm on a Friday after school) will be set and parents will be informed. Students may collect their non-smart mobile phone or smartwatch at the end of the day of confiscation at 3.00pm.
- 5.2.9 The email to parents/carers to notify of the Leadership Detention will be sent automatically through Arbor.
- 5.2.10 Any subsequent misuse of smartwatches or non-smart phones in the same term will require a parent to come to school to collect the device, as well as the setting of a Leadership Detention.
- 5.2.11 The sanctions will be reset every term.
- 5.2.12 Our Safeguarding Policy explains in more detail the procedures we would follow in the case of a serious incident where we believe a crime has been committed using a smart device/mobile technology (for example, upskirting). In all incidents of this nature, our first step would be to confiscate the mobile phone/smart device.

6. Loss, theft or damage

- 6.1 Students should mark their non-smart mobile phones clearly with their name
- 6.2 Students who bring a non-smart 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 non-smart mobile phone well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.
- 6.3 Students must secure their non-smart mobile technology as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Students must keep these passwords / pin numbers confidential.
- 6.4 Mobile technology/smart devices found in school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed in to student reception.
- 6.5 The school accepts no responsibility for mobile technology/smart devices that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.
- 6.6 Confiscated student mobile technology/smart devices will be stored initially at student reception – this office is either manned by a member of staff or locked at all times. Smart devices will then be transferred to the school safe.

7. Monitoring and review

- 7.1 The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:
 - Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
 - Feedback from staff
 - Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
 - Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of the Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral in a timely manner.

8. Links to other policies

- Behaviour and Statement of Behaviour Principles Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Prevention of Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Acceptable Use Policy
- Student Acceptable Use IT policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy
- Suspensions and Permanent Exclusion Policy

Appendix 1 – Smart Device-Free Ringwood – A Guide for Families



Smart Device-Free Ringwood - A Guide for Families

Why we are making this change



Prioritising Mental Wellbeing

Feedback indicates that smart devices contribute to social conflict, bullying, unrealistic body image expectations and unhappiness among students.



Removing Digital Distraction

The school has determined that a 'no see, no hear' policy is no longer sufficient to prevent interruptions to learning.



Aligning with National Policy

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools' Act puts a legal responsibility on all schools to be smart device-free environments.

What is allowed on site



Non-Smart Phones

Students may carry a non-smart phone with no internet access or camera to ensure contractability when travelling to and from school. This non-smart handset must be off and away during the school day.



Permitted GPS Trackers

Discrete devices such as Apple AirTags or bag-clip trackers are allowed to provide parents with commute reassurance.

Prohibited Technology



Strictly Banned Devices

Smart devices, smartwatches, and any device featuring internet or camera access are not permitted on the school site.

Smart Device vs Smart Device-Free Impact



Smart Device

Social Media Conflict

Unrestricted access to social media platforms leads to digital conflict and bullying during the school day.



Secret Filming

The presence of smart devices allows for unauthorised filming, compromising the privacy of students and staff.



Learning Focus

Constant digital alerts and notifications from smart devices interrupt learning and distract students from their lessons.



Smart Device-Free Impact

School Day Peace

By removing the platform for conflict, social media issues are eliminated from the school day.



Risk Elimination

The risk of unauthorised filming is entirely eliminated during school hours, protecting student and staff privacy.



Increased Engagement

Without digital alerts and notifications, students are less anxious and show increased engagement in their learning.

Supporting Our Students



Travel and Home Learning Support

Physical bus passes can be printed; paper student diaries can be requested and students have access to computers in the library every day for home learning.



Medical Monitoring Exemptions

Individual exemptions are provided for students who require smart devices for medical needs, such as managing diabetes.



Digital Safety Curriculum

Students continue to receive dedicated lessons covering algorithms, deepfakes, and online relationship risks to ensure they stay safe outside of school.

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