



Ringwood School

Student Mobile Technology Policy

Policy Name	Student Mobile Technology
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Author	Heather Jolly, Assistant Headteacher
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Authorised By	Leanne Symonds, Headteacher and the Student Welfare Governing Committee
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Review Date	February 2028
Rationale for Policy	To share and enforce expectations of acceptable mobile technology use by students on School site and whilst representing the School

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1. Introduction and aims

- 1.1 Every school has a duty to create an environment that is calm, safe and free from distraction so all students, whatever their background, can learn and thrive. One of the greatest challenges facing schools is the presence of mobile phones. A report by Ofcom ('Children's Media Use and Attitudes Report 2023) suggests that today, by the age of 12, 97% of students own a mobile phone. The Office for National Statistics (2020) states that one in five students have experienced bullying online.
- 1.2 At Ringwood School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.
- 1.3 This policy aims to:
- Promote safe and responsible mobile technology use
 - Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile technology by students
 - Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour
- 1.4 This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:
- Risks to child protection
 - Data protection issues
 - Potential for lesson disruption
 - Risk of theft, loss, or damage
 - Appropriate use of technology in the classroom
- Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile technology' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 There is no pre-requisite for students attending Ringwood School to have a mobile phone. Students at Ringwood School do not need to have a mobile phone.
- 1.7 This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's February 2026 guidance [Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK](#) and [behaviour guidance](#).

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

- 2.1.1 All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy.
- 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 mobile phones.
- 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 mobile technology 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, 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 mobile phones/technology given to their child.
- 2.2.4 Parents/carers have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones and should reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-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 phone 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 phone is seen, heard or used in this way then our usual sanctions will apply (see section 5).

3. Use of mobile technology by students

- 3.1 The DfE's 'Mobile phones in schools' guidance (February 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 2025, Year 7 students are only allowed to bring non-smartphones onto school site for their first academic year at Ringwood School. A non-smartphone is a phone that does not have internet access or a front-facing camera. Procedures and sanctions for not adhering to this rule are outlined in 5.2.
- 3.3 At Ringwood School, **all student mobile phones/technology should never be seen, used or heard** on school site. 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.
- 3.4 The only exception to this is as a health care need (see 3.8)

- 3.5 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
- 3.6 Sixth-form students are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other students. Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones 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' mobile technology must not be used, seen or heard when walking around the main school site. Misuse of mobile technology by students in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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 their mobile phone or smartwatch to monitor their blood sugar. Use of mobile 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).
- 3.9 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 personal mobile technology to contact home, under their supervision, or they may contact home on their behalf.
- 3.10 Year 7 students will receive education on e-safety through the curriculum as part of their ITaCS 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).
- 3.11 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

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- 4.1 The DfE's 'Mobile phones in schools' guidance (February 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.
- 4.3 In line with DfE guidance, from February 2026, smartwatches may **not** be worn by students at Ringwood School. 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 mobile technology should not be seen, used or heard on school site.
- 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 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 have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.
- 5.1.5 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.
- 5.1.6 Mobile phones must be switched off; not on silent or vibrate. Mobile phones should not disrupt the learning of any student.
- 5.1.7 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.
- 5.1.8 No member of the Ringwood School community should use their phone to take photos or videos of other people.
- 5.1.9 It is also unacceptable to upload these photos to social media or websites.
- 5.1.10 The transmission of violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images is a criminal offence.
- 5.1.11 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.
- 5.1.12 Students should have their mobile technology secure inside bags (or inside blazer pockets) prior to arriving at school in the morning.

5.1.13 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 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 mobile technology, including smartwatches, is used, seen or heard, or if a Year 7 student is found in possession of a smartphone on school site) will have their 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 phone/smart device, switched off, immediately when requested. Refusal to hand over a phone/smart device will be sanctioned as defiance.
- 5.2.4 It is part of our expectations of working in our Inclusion Room that students hand their 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 Year 7 student is found in possession of a smartphone on school site (or whilst on a school trip, or extra-curricular activity), the mobile phone will be confiscated and will not be returned to the student for a period of six school weeks (excluding holidays). The mobile phone 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 attend a meeting at the School.
- 5.2.6 For Year 8-11 students, and for a Year 7 student with a non-smart phone, for the first offence (ie. if student mobile technology is seen, used or heard) in a term, 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).
- 5.2.7 Reception will record on a checklist when mobile technology 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. Year 8-11 students, and Year 7 students with a non-smart phone, may collect their mobile technology on the day of confiscation at 3.00pm after parents have given consent for the student to have their mobile technology returned.
- 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 the mobile technology in the same term will require a parent to come to school to collect the mobile technology, 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 mobile phone/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 mobile technology 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 Students must secure their 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 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 that is 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 will be stored at student reception – this office is either manned by a member of staff or locked at all times.

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