



Ribston Hall High School

Mobile Phone Policy

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1. Introduction and aims

At Ribston Hall High School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy.

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.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every three years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

3.2 Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring the appropriate age-related access to apps and software for their child. Parents are overall responsible for monitoring use both on and off site. We strongly recommend that time or location-based filters are used to prevent the use of phones during school hours.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are permitted to use their personal mobile phone for work purposes. The school acknowledges the need for two-factor authentication and permits staff to use their device in school in line with the school acceptable use policy. This also includes (but not limited to) the use of school softphone apps, Arbor Registers, Fire register apps etc.

Use of mobile phones for personal use must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom or offices).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01452 382249 as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Gemini).

This guidance links to [other policies](#) such as our ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Data Protection Policy.

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Issuing homework, rewards or sanctions
- Use of multi-factor authentication
- Use of 'soft-phone' apps
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct.

4.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with access to a 'soft-phone' app (using your phone data connection to access the school phone system) by the school for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by students

Students should not use their mobile phones during the school day (8.35-15.25), including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. Students are allowed to use their phones outside of these hours for checking homework, using revision apps, communicating with parents etc.

Mobile phones should be safely stored out of sight in a pocket, bag or locker, turned off or on silent, unless required for a specific medical need, in which case the Head of Year will make staff aware.

Sixth Form students may use their phone in the Sixth Form common room and study areas, but when they move to the main school they must follow the same rules as Years 7-11.

If a student needs to make contact with a parent during the school day they should go to Wellbeing (or Reception if Wellbeing is closed) and ask for help to relay the message.

Students may be given specific permission to use their phone by a member of staff in exceptional circumstances, in this instance the student must follow the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by students

The DfE's [non-statutory mobile phone guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

Our approach to smart watches is that they operate in the same way as smartphones and should only be used for time keeping during the school day.

5.2 Use of mobile phones off school site

The member of staff running the off-site visit (fixture, day trip or residential) will provide instructions regarding any reasonable adjustments to the policy for the duration of the trip. The school's ICT Acceptable Use Policy applies at all times in this scenario.

5.3 Sanctions

Students using mobile phones during the school day will have their phone confiscated and stored at reception for collection by the student at the end of the school day. The student will also be issued with a lunchtime detention in the next available slot.

Phones confiscated during Period 5 will be held by the member of staff and returned at the end of the lesson with a lunchtime detention the next school day. Sanctions will escalate for repeated offences in accordance with our behaviour policy.

Staff have the power to search students' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). The DfE guidance allows you to search a student's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

In this instance, the school will also consider whether the student's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault

- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of students, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with students

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of students, their work, or anything else that could identify a pupil

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for students using their phones, as set out in section 5 above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

Students bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that the phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely.

Students must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from school.

Confiscated phones will be stored at reception for collection at 15.25.

Lost phones should be handed in to reception. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

8. Monitoring and review

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 students
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

Mobile Phone Policy FAQs for Parents and Students

1. What is the core rule on mobile phones?

All mobile phones must be **switched off and out of sight from 08:35 until 15:25**.

This applies to all year groups, including Sixth Form when outside the Sixth Form building.

2. What happens if a student is seen with their phone during the school day?

If a phone is **seen or heard**, regardless of whether it is being used, the phone will be:

1. **Confiscated immediately**
2. **Taken to Reception**
3. **Returned at the end of the day**
4. **A lunchtime detention issued**

There are no warnings and no exceptions unless pre-agreed as part of an adjustment.

3. Can a student use their phone to contact home if they feel unwell or anxious?

Yes - **but not independently**. In **exceptional circumstances**, students may use their phone to contact home, **under the direct supervision of the Wellbeing Team (or reception if Wellbeing is closed)**.

Students should not self-manage medical or wellbeing contact.

4. Are Sixth Form students allowed to use their phones?

Yes, but **only in the Sixth Form building**.

Outside this space - including corridors, classrooms and shared areas - Sixth Form students must follow the same rules as the rest of the school (phones off and away 08:35–15:25). They should use laptops from the library or sixth form centre or own devices (other than phones).

5. Can students use phones before school or after school?

Before **08:35** and after **15:25**, students may use their phones.

Phones must not be used in corridors, classrooms or social spaces at any point during the school day.

6. What if a student needs their phone for a medical reason?

A small number of students may have approved adjustments.

These must be:

- **Authorised in advance** by the Head of Year or SENCO
- **Communicated clearly to relevant staff**
- **Used only for the agreed purpose**

7. What should parents do if they need to get a message to their child?

Parents must contact **Reception**, not their child directly.

Messages will be passed on through the school.

Students must not check or use their phones during the school day to pick up messages.

8. What responsibilities do parents have under the policy?

To support the school's aims and safeguarding responsibilities, we ask parents to:

- **Block access to all social media apps during the school day** via parental controls or device settings
- Reinforce the rule that phones must be **off and away between 08:35–15:25**
- Avoid contacting your child directly during school hours
- Remind them that consequences apply if phones are visible or audible

9. What if a phone is lost, damaged or stolen?

Responsibility for personal devices rests with the student and parent.

The school cannot accept liability for loss, theft or damage.

10. Will there be any exceptions for trips or visits?

A member of staff may authorise supervised use for:

- Contacting parents regarding arrival times
- Photography for learning purposes
- Travel-related comfort (e.g., music on coaches)

Any such adaptation must be **explicitly communicated** by staff.

11. Why has the school adopted this approach?

To support:

- A calmer, more focused learning environment

- Reduced distraction and social media pressure
- Stronger safeguarding
- Improved social interaction and wellbeing
- Preparation for rigorous academic expectations at GCSE & A Level (Grades 7–9 GCSE, A/A* A-Level)