

Ryburn Valley High School

Mobile Phone Policy



Version	1
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Last Updated/Reviewed	December 2021
Next Review Date	December 2024

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Mobile Phone and Other Electronic Devices Acceptable Use Policy

This policy reads in conjunction with the on-line safety policy and anti-bullying policy.

For the purposes of this policy, all references to 'mobile phone(s)' should be taken to include any electronic communication and/or recording technology. Examples of these include smart watches, camera phones, handheld computers (e.g., iPad), Wi-Fi connectivity enabled devices) Ear Pods. This is not a definitive list.

Aim of this policy

The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at school. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.

Ryburn Valley High School has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.

Students, and their parents/carers must read, understand and accept this policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to school.

The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, camps, and extra-curricular activities both at school and off-site.

Rationale

Our rural setting and the distance of working parents presents challenges when it comes to communications. The school recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used appropriately.

Personal safety and security

Our School accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There are also increasing concerns about children travelling alone on public transport, commuting long distances to school and walking home via rural and isolated routes. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently. This policy has been written to take account of these risks, the need to ensure the school can meet its statutory responsibility for safeguarding students and to reflect parents' views about safeguarding their child/children.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the rules outlined in this policy.

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

Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school, the school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or theft incurred due to its use or being at school. The school would advise parents to check that their household insurance covers loss or damage of mobile phones.

Parents/carers are reminded that the Student Services/Reception must be the initial point of contact during the normal school day and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also eliminates lessons being inadvertently disrupted.

Acceptable Uses

Mobile phones should be switched off immediately upon arrival to school and before entering school buildings. The mobile phone must be kept out of sight and in bags at all times during the school day. Exceptions may be permitted only in exceptional, time-limited circumstances if the parent/carer specifically requests it. This must be supported by any relevant (medical) documentation and the decision will be at the school's discretion. Such requests must be handled on a case-by-case basis and must be directed to the Headteacher. In cases of emergency, parents/carers must contact the school first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements.

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.

Unacceptable Uses

Please see Appendix 1 for a definitive list of unacceptable uses under this policy.

Theft or damage

The theft and/or damage of mobile phones will follow the policy guidance in Appendix 2 of this policy.

Exams and Inappropriate conduct

Please see Appendix 3 of this policy.

Sanctions

Students who infringe the rules set out in this document will have their phones confiscated by teachers. If the phone is seen (including in the trouser pocket) the student must give it to a teacher if requested.

On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken, in the first instance to the main reception, where it will be enveloped, and the infringement logged. It will then be securely locked away within Student Services/main reception. The student will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day. A letter will also be sent to the parent/carer to inform them of the incident. The pupil will also be given a lunchtime detention as a sanction.

On the second infringement the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to the main reception, where it will be enveloped, and the infringement logged. Parents/carers will be notified and requested to collect the phone in person from the school. The phone can be collected the same day of confiscation. If a parent/carer is unable to attend the school the phone can be returned directly to the student at the end of the second day of confiscation (e.g., confiscated on Wednesday, returned on Thursday at 3:15pm) with the exception of Friday when the phone will be returned that same day. A record of the second infringement will be made. A second letter will also be sent to the parent / carer to advise them this is the second infringement and remind them of the consequences of subsequent infringements. The pupil will also be placed in an after-school detention

A third or subsequent infringement of the mobile phone policy, will result in the phone being confiscated and taken to the main office where it will be enveloped, and the infringement logged. The phone will only then be returned to a parent/carer upon attending a pre-arranged meeting, at the discretion of the school, with the Head of Year or a senior member of the school leadership team. The meeting will not be arranged on the same day of confiscation. The pupil will also be placed in isolation for a designated time or be placed in a Senior Leadership Detention.

The school reserves the right to ban a student from bringing a mobile phone to school given repeated infringements of this policy or in the case of a serious misuse of a mobile phone. The school also reserves the right to ask a child to hand in their mobile phone for a prolonged period of time if there has been a infringement of this policy or a safeguarding concern raised about the students use of a mobile phone.

As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this policy may result in an alleged incident (of a serious nature) being referred to the police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.

Appendix 1

Unacceptable Uses

Mobile phones must be switched off upon arrival to school and before entering school buildings. They must not be switched on until the end of the school day at 3:15pm. Once they are off site or about to board their bus. Students may switch their mobile phones on only once they are outside and are leaving school after 3:15pm or if the student is waiting in reception to be collected following an after-school activity.

Mobile phones must not be used at any time on the school site or in school corridors and classrooms.

Unless express permission is granted and in exceptional circumstances (for example medical reasons where a GPs has not been provided), mobile phones should not be used for any purpose during the school day.

Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. 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.

Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action (this can be outside of school as well) in conjunction with our behaviour policy.

Mobile phones must not be used to engage in any forms of the following both inside and outside school via any format i.e. Text, SMS message, pictures, phone calls or any other media channel.

- personal attacks
- harassing another person,
- posting private information about another person
- taking/sending photos or inappropriate/objectionable images
- use mobile phones to bully other students

Students found to be using their mobile phone inappropriately may face disciplinary action.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any student or member of staff without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.

Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting', which is the sending of personal sexual imagery, is also a criminal offence.

Mobile phones must not be used in changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors of the school.

It is unacceptable to take a picture of a member of staff without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images and an appropriate sanction will be issued.

Appendix 2

Theft or damage

Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.

Students who bring a mobile phone to school must switch the phone off immediately upon arriving to school and before entering school buildings, they should be placed in their bag. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.

Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to the main office.

The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students are strongly advised to keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.

Appendix 3

Exams and Inappropriate conduct

As per instructions by JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications), mobile phones and watches are banned from all examinations. Consequently, students must not bring mobile phones to any external examination. Students who arrive to examinations with a mobile phone must leave their phones in their bags and their bags are placed in a 'bag store'. Alternatively, students do not bring mobile phones into school when examinations are taking place. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination risk having that paper disqualified by the exam board and JCQ. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified. The school has a statutory responsibility to ensure the integrity of examinations and must report all such infringements to JCQ.