



# Mobile Phones in School Policy

<b>Responsibility</b>	Students, Parents & Community	
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## 1. Context

The Richmond upon Thames School (RTS) recognises the importance of responsible use of personal digital devices. However, these devices can be used inappropriately and are potential targets for theft and bullying.

This policy aligns with the Department for Education's February 2024 guidance to prohibit mobile phones throughout the school day, supporting a calm, safe learning environment and reducing distractions. It also reflects London Grid for Learning's expectations around personal device use, including BYOD limitations and acceptable-use practices.

## 2. Other policies and procedures

When reading this policy, you should also refer to the following related policies and procedures, in line with the Department for Education guidance Mobile phones in schools (DfE, February 2024):

- Online-Safety
- Behaviour for Learning
- Anti-Bullying
- Safeguarding and Child Protection

## 3. Technology presents a number of issues for schools

- The high value of many phones creates a potential target for theft
- The integration of cameras into phones which can lead to potential child protection and data protection issues
- Connectivity which could result in the transmission of unsuitable material
- Low level disruption within lessons and around the school

## 4. RTS approach to the use of mobile phones in school

- Students must place all personal digital devices (including mobile phones, smart watches, fitness trackers, and similar items) in their Yondr pouch on arrival at school.
- The Yondr pouch must remain locked at all times while the student is on the school site.
- Where a student forgets their Yondr pouch, a loan pouch will be issued from Reception. Loan pouches can only be unlocked at Reception, and the student will be required to leave a personal item in exchange until the pouch is returned.
- Personal laptops, tablets, and iPads are not permitted on the school site under any circumstances.
- The connection of any personal device to the school internet network constitutes a serious breach of the Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- Mobile phones should not be used to cause a nuisance in the local community, e.g. playing of audio, video, conversations on loudspeaker on public transportation

### 4.1. RTS approach to the use of mobile phones on trips and visits

#### 4.1.1. Sporting fixtures and day trips/visits

- Mobile phones and other personal devices are not permitted on the way to or from sports events or other day trips and visits, whether at an off-site venue, on the school's home ground (which is classed as school premises), or when travelling with staff on public or school-designated transport such as minibuses or coaches.

#### 4.1.2. Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions

- Mobile phones are not permitted on the way to or from the Duke of Edinburgh venue, (whether travelling with staff or with the student walking group), during the Duke of Edinburgh expedition or at the campsite.

- Prior to the expedition, **one** designated student will be given permission to carry their (switched off) mobile phone inside their rucksack. This designated mobile phone will only be used in case of emergency i.e. a student is injured, the walking group do not have an adult and are lost on their route; the walking group find themselves in a situation where they do not feel safe. Students are given the allocated trip mobile number on their route packs to use in case of emergency. The expedition tracking sheet carries the mobile phone numbers of designated students.
- In the instance of the designated student being injured or the group unable to unlock their phone, the tracker which is attached to the designated student's bag has an SOS function that can be launched and will send alerts to the staff who have the tracker app on their devices. The minibus with the first aider will be en route followed by roving staff nearby or on foot.

#### **4.1.3. Trips and Visits to Theme Parks in England**

- Phones and other personal devices must remain locked in the student's Yondr pouch while on the school site.
- No phones or devices are to be taken on trips unless they are specifically required for a planned activity and approved in advance by staff.
- During any periods of free time when students are unaccompanied by group leaders, staff will make clear where they are located at the venue should students need to make contact.

#### **4.1.4. Overnight / residentials**

- All personal devices must remain locked in Yondr pouches during travel and while at the destination, unless temporarily unlocked by staff for a specific approved purpose (e.g. photography at a designated time).
- Devices will be re-locked in pouches once the activity has finished.
- Devices are not permitted to remain in student rooms overnight
- Group leaders may allow students to have their phones for a set period of time in the evening (up to 1 hour) at the accommodation
- Students will hand their phones to their group leader for safe-keeping/charging overnight.
- Students will be informed prior to the trip that they must bring battery pack chargers with them so their phones can be charged during the night.
- Alternatively students may leave their phones charging in their room during the day whilst out, rather than giving them to the group leader

### **5. Suspicion of material on the mobile**

- 5.1. If a member of staff has reasonable suspicion that a device contains unsuitable material, has been used to take photographs or recordings on the school site, or has been used in any form of bullying, the student will be required to hand over the device immediately. The device will be secured by a senior member of staff, and parents will be contacted to arrange collection. This will be treated as a serious breach of the Behaviour for Learning Policy and may result in additional sanctions.
- 5.2. In circumstances where there is a suspicion that the material on the mobile may provide evidence relating to a Police matter, the phone will be handed over to the Police for further investigation. Parents will need to recover the phone from the Police in such circumstances. The school may be asked to withhold the phone and hand it over to the police for further investigation.

## **6. Damage and Loss mobiles and other electronic items brought into school**

- 6.1. The school is not responsible for the loss of, or damage to, any student-owned digital device, including mobile phones, smart watches, fitness trackers, tablets, laptops, or similar items.
- 6.2. Students remain responsible for their own property and accept the risk of loss or damage should they choose to bring personal devices onto the school site.
- 6.3. The school strongly advises that students only bring essential items as permitted in this policy. Any non-essential personal devices are brought entirely at the student's own risk.

## **7. Failure to comply with the Policy**

- 7.1. Any phone or device found outside its Yondr pouch, or not stored as required, will automatically be treated as a prohibited item under the Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- 7.2. Devices will be confiscated and held securely for one week, and may only be collected by appointment with a parent/carer.
- 7.3. Students are strongly discouraged from bringing personal devices into school beyond what is permitted in this policy.

## **8. Changes to this policy**

Parents and Students should note that the school reserves the right to change this policy during the course of the academic year.