



## **MOBILE PHONE POLICY**

**Term of policy:** One Year

**Approved by:** LGB 24.6.26

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**Author:** Saqib Ahmed & Miriam Manderson

**Sources:** DfE Guidance – Creating a mobile phone-free school

**Online location:** Policies

**Consulted with JCC?** Yes ☐ No ☒

### **Introduction**

This policy replaces any previous policy and follows the DfE regulations.

**As part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, we have carefully considered the impact of this policy on equality. The school will ensure that this policy is applied fairly to all employees and does not have a negative impact on students or staff with protected characteristics, race, sex, religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.**

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## 1. Aims

At Rooks Heath School, we are committed to providing a focused, inclusive and supportive learning environment where all students are able to thrive. The misuse of mobile phones and personal electronic devices has been shown to increase distraction, disrupt lessons, exacerbate incidents of bullying and misconduct, and reduce overall student wellbeing.

According to the Department for Education's 2024 guidance, mobile-free school environments have been shown to result in:

- Fewer behavioural incidents
- Greater classroom focus
- Safer and more inclusive school culture
- Increased face-to-face social engagement

This policy ensures clarity and fairness for all members of our school community and is in line with DfE recommendations to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the entire school day. We want our students to be fully engaged with each other and focused on their education with minimal distractions during school hours.

This policy fosters a distraction-free, community-driven environment by providing clear guidelines for the use of all personal communication devices, including smartphones and basic phones. It aims to eliminate distractions, promote a safe, respectful, and academically focused school culture, establish consistent expectations for students, support staff in enforcement, and strengthen partnerships with parents.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

### 2.1 Staff

All staff should consistently enforce the school's mobile phone policy. Staff must avoid using personal mobile phones for non-professional reasons in the presence of students during the school day. This supports a culture of consistency and reinforces student expectations regarding phone use. In specific situations, it may be appropriate for staff to use mobile devices for educational or administrative purposes — for example, to issue homework, apply rewards or sanctions, or access secure systems requiring multi-factor authentication. Class teachers/form tutors and the student support hub staff primarily are responsible for collection of phones during morning registration and returning phones for students at the end of the school day. Administration staff will support where necessary, particularly for students with special arrangements for medical appointments and/or trips.

### 2.2 Students

All students must hand in their phones and any electronic personal devices during morning tutor time. These are securely stored and returned at the end of the day. All students are expected to comply fully with this policy. If a student needs to urgently contact home during school hours, they should speak to a member of the Pastoral Team where appropriate support will be provided. Devices must be **switched off** before being handed in. Any student attempting to use a phone during the day will have it confiscated and sanctions will be applied (see section 4 Sanctions on Policy Breach)

## 2.3 Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents. The Governing Board will review this policy annually during scheduled meetings to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

## 2.4 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to support the school's stance on mobile phone use and ensure their children follow the rules outlined in this policy.

The school will not accommodate requests for early return of confiscated phones.

Parents/carers are encouraged to inform the school if their child **does not bring a smartphone to school**. This information should be shared via formal communication to the school and signing of the mobile phone agreement (see appendix 1), allowing the school to update central records and ensure the student is recognised as a non-phone user.

## 2.5. The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.

## 3. Procedures

### 3.1 General Expectations

The school operates as a Mobile Phone-Free School.

- All students are expected to hand in their mobile phones upon arrival at school.
- Phones must be handed in daily and collected at the designated time and location.
- The school provides individual transparent pouches for each student mobile, parents are welcome to purchase their own cases or pouches which can be used by tutors.

### 3.2 Morning Procedures by Year Group Upon arrival

- Students are required to hand in their phone during the morning tutor time, as part of tutor time routines.
- Any student who is late to school is expected to hand in their phone at the reception area to a member of the attendance/reception team.
- Phones are collected by staff and will be separated by form groups and students that have may have an after school detention.
- Students with a Medical/dental appointment during the day will have their phone stored at reception until departure.
- Any student with a medical exemption that requires use of a smart phone (e.g. diabetes for insulin monitoring) will not have their phone collected and will be allowed discreet phone access.

- Students on a school trip will be directed by the trip leader regarding access to their phones
- Some students with special arrangements will have permission for phone hand-in at a designated secure location (e.g., SSHUB).
- Phones are secured until the end of the day where they are then returned to students either in form rooms or after school detention.

### 3.2 Late Arrivals

- Phones are collected by morning senior duty staff at reception and placed into Numbered Wallets this will run until the end of registration. Any student who arrives after this will hand their phone into reception staff.
- Late students must attend the after-school detention and can only have their phones collected after 3:35pm unless they have a scheduled medical appointment or a school trip in which case they collect their phones according to their appointment or trip time. (see special circumstances below)
- Late students must be logged, and relevant staff informed.

### 3.2 Special Circumstances

- **Medical Appointments:** Phones are stored in pouches and held at reception.
- **School Trips:** Phones are stored in pouches in reception and passed to the trip leader. Trip leaders must plan for phone return at the end of the trip.
- **Medical needs:** Any student who requires use of their mobile phone for medical needs specifically diabetic students will be issued a red card and are able to carry their phones throughout the school day.

### 3.4 Phone Collection at End of Day

- Students are expected to return to their tutor room at the end of the school day at 3:10pm.
- Tutors will return student mobile phones to each of their tutees and dismiss students from the designated rooms by 3:15pm.
- Any student that has an after-school detention will be given their phone in the detention location after completing their after-school detention.
- If the student arrived late at school, they will need to collect their phone from detention at 3:35pm  
**NO EXCEPTIONS.**

## 4. Sanctions for Policy Breach

### Confiscation Procedure

If a student fails to hand in their phone or is found in possession of one during the school day, the phone will be confiscated in line with the behaviour policy and kept securely.

If a student is found with a phone during the day (not handed in):

- **First Offence**
  - Phone held for 48 hours.
  - Parent will be contacted and must collect the phone, no exceptions and no early collections.
  - Warning letter issued.
- **Second Offence**
  - Phone held for 5 days minimum.
  - Parent will be contacted and must collect the phone, no exceptions and no early collections.
  - Student receives a 1 day withdrawal.
  - Parent informed via letter.
- **Third Offence**
  - Phone held for 2 weeks minimum, no exceptions.
  - Parent will also be expected to meet with the Head of Year for a prebooked meeting.
  - Student receives 2 days external suspension or withdrawal depending on severity.
- Any student who attempts to hand in a fake or decoy phone, refuses to hand in their phone, or claims that they are in possession of another person's phone will be subject to further sanctions including fixed term suspension and will then be expected to hand in their phone.
- Rooks Heath School will not accommodate requests from students, parents, carers, or family members for the early return of confiscated mobile phones. This applies even if the device is owned by someone other than the student, as the possession and use of any mobile phone on the school site during the school day is considered a breach of the school's mobile phone policy.
- All confiscated devices will be stored securely and returned only at the designated time, as set out in the school's procedures. This approach ensures consistency, fairness, and adherence to the principles of our policy.

#### **4. Searching and Screening mobile phones**

##### **4.1 Inappropriate Content and Unauthorised Use**

Mobile phones and electronic devices must never be used for purposes that breach the school's behaviour, safeguarding, or digital conduct standards. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Bullying, harassing, or threatening other students or staff, whether verbally, via messages, or through digital content.
- Recording audio, video, or images of staff, students, or lessons without prior and explicit permission from a member of staff.

- Accessing or sharing explicit, violent, discriminatory, or harmful material, including through unfiltered internet access.
- Using social media, messaging platforms, or gaming apps during school hours.
- Taking photographs or videos of anyone without their consent.
- Using devices in sensitive areas, such as restrooms, changing rooms, or on school transport.

All content on a personal device – including background images, lock screens, ringtones, videos, music, saved files, or downloaded apps – must be appropriate for a school environment. Anything deemed inappropriate will be treated as a behaviour or safeguarding concern and may result in confiscation, further investigation, and parental involvement.

## **4.2 Device Inspection and Safeguarding**

Rooks Heath School takes student safety and digital safeguarding seriously. In situations where there are reasonable safeguarding concerns – including suspected bullying, harassment, possession of prohibited material, or misuse of a device – the school reserves the right to inspect a student's device in accordance with DfE statutory guidance.

Inspections may involve:

Reviewing call logs, messages, app activity, and stored images or videos relevant to the concern.

Requesting students to unlock their devices or share relevant access credentials to facilitate investigation.

Involving external agencies, such as the Police or Social Services where appropriate under child protection and safeguarding protocols.

By bringing a personal electronic device onto school premises, students and parents consent to the school's right to inspect confiscated devices in accordance with legal and safeguarding obligations.

This measure supports the school's commitment to safeguarding all students and ensures that mobile phones are not used in any way that undermines the safety, wellbeing, or dignity of others.

## **5. Mobile Phone Storage, Protection, and Liability Policy**

To ensure clarity and mutual understanding between the school and parents/carers, the following section outlines details concerning the storage of phones while in our care.

### **5.1 Expectations for Parents and Carers**

When your child brings a mobile phone to school to be stored:

- **Protective Case Required:**

Parents/carers must supply a robust and protective phone pouch or case for safeguarding the device from damage during handling. Devices must be clearly labelled with the student's full name and tutor group.

- **Insurance Recommendation:**

While Rooks Heath takes reasonable steps to ensure phones are securely stored, parents/carers are strongly encouraged to add the device to their home insurance policy. The school does not accept responsibility for cosmetic or functional damage to devices, especially if not stored in a protective case.

## 5.2 Rooks Heath School Expectations

To ensure all mobile phones handed in are safe and accounted for:

- **Secure Storage** - Devices will be collected by form tutors during morning registration and stored in a secure area. All storage areas are situated in classrooms or offices monitored by internal CCTV, which covers doorways and access points.
- **Loss or Theft Cover** - Rooks Heath High School is part of the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) – a government-backed insurance scheme. In the event of proven loss or theft while a phone is in the school's care:
  - A claim may be made for up to £500 per pupil.
  - Claims must be supported by evidence of hand-in and investigation procedures.
- **No Cover for Damage** - The school does not accept liability for accidental or cosmetic damage to phones (e.g. cracked screens, scratches, water damage). We reiterate the need for a durable, protective case.
- **Liability in Cases of Non-Compliance** - In accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, if a student **does not comply** with the phone policy and their device is **lost, stolen, or damaged** while not stored by the school (e.g. if it is kept in a pocket, bag, or locker), **Rooks Heath cannot accept any liability** for loss or damage.
- **Legal Protection for Staff** - As stated in DfE guidance:

"Schools have the power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully."  
(DfE, *Behaviour in Schools Guidance*, 2022)

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### Summary of Liability:

| Situation                         | Liability Accepted?  | Notes                                                               |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phone handed in properly          | ✓ Yes (loss/theft)   | Up to £500 cover under RPA; <b>does not include damage</b>          |
| Phone brought but not handed in   | ✗ No                 | Student did not follow school policy; school not responsible        |
| Phone damaged due to lack of case | ✗ No                 | Parents/carers are expected to supply a <b>robust named case</b>    |
| Confiscated phone lost/damaged    | ✗ No (within reason) | DfE protects schools where lawful disciplinary confiscation is used |

## **6. Parent Contact & Questions**

If you have any questions about the storage or safeguarding of student devices, or if you wish to raise a concern about confiscation or loss, you may contact your child's **Head of Year** or submit a **formal written request for review** to the **Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral**.

## **7. Communication with your child during the school day**

Parents/carers must not contact students directly during the school day. Any essential communication must go through the school office. A student-use phone is available in the HoY's office for urgent matters.

## **8. Procedures for Disputes or Appeals**

Any concerns regarding enforcement of this policy can be directed to the Head of Year or Deputy Headteacher via a formal request for review.

## **9. Final Word**

We are proud to lead by example in adopting a phone-free approach that places wellbeing, academic excellence, and respectful interaction at the heart of our school. We trust this policy will support all members of the Rooks Heath community in creating an environment where every student can flourish.

## **APPENDIX 1**

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Rooks Heath School Mobile Phone Agreement Form (Parent/Carer Declaration)**

As part of our Mobile Phone-Free School policy, all students are expected to hand in their mobile phone or personal electronic device at the start of each school day, unless a prior agreement is recorded stating that the student does not bring a phone to school.

If you have any questions, contact us at: [contactus@rooksheath.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:contactus@rooksheath.harrow.sch.uk)

Please complete the form below to confirm your child's mobile phone status.

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Year Group/Tutor Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please tick ONE of the following options:**

☐ **My child will bring a mobile phone to school.**

I understand and agree that my child must hand in their phone (switched off) to their Form Tutor each morning and collect it at the end of the school day. I understand that failure to follow this policy will result in appropriate sanctions, including confiscation and possible searches.

☐ **My child will NOT bring a mobile phone to school.**

I confirm that my child will not bring a mobile phone or personal electronic device to school. I understand that this agreement will be recorded by the school and exempts my child from the daily phone hand-in process.

I also understand that if a phone is discovered in my child's possession after this declaration has been made, they will be sanctioned in line with the school's behaviour policy.

**Should we wish to change this agreement at any stage, we understand that we must contact the school to complete and sign a new agreement form.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Carer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_