

# Reading School Mobile Phone Policy

Policy Number: E52



## **Responsibilities**

Policy Owner: Lizzie Ayres, DSL

Governors Committee: EXPC

## **Audit Control**

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## Document Control and Approval

## Version Control

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1.2				

## Responsibilities

Name	Job Title	Responsible for:

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# 1. Rationale and Purpose

This policy has been developed to support the safeguarding, mental health and wellbeing of our students, ensure a focused learning environment, and reduce online behavioural incidents. As mobile technology continues to evolve, it is essential that schools manage its use responsibly to protect children from potential risks, including online harm, distraction, and exposure to inappropriate content. We value parents' support with these issues.

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](#).

This policy should be read alongside the e-safety policy.

## 2. Policy Overview

To promote a safe and positive culture at Reading School, the use of mobile phones is regulated as follows:

- **Smartphones (including smart watches) are prohibited** for students in **Year 7** and **Year 8** from September 2025.
- There will be a **transition period** for **Year 8 students** from **September 2025 to December 2025**, during which parents may provide their child with a basic mobile phone ('dumb' phone), through the recommendations listed on <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives>
- From **January 2026**, all Year 8 students must comply fully with the smartphone ban.
- From **September 2026**, the prohibition on smartphones and smartwatches will extend to **Year 9 students**.
- **Students in Year 10 and above** may **bring smartphones to school**, but these must remain **switched off and stored out of sight in bags** throughout the school day, including breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Use of smartphones during the school day is not permitted unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff for learning or pastoral purposes.
- Reading School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of mobile phones brought onto the premises.

## 3. Approved Devices

- During the Year 8 transition period (Sept–Dec 2025), parents may supply their child with a basic or 'dumb' phone if communication before or after school is necessary.
- Recommended devices include those that are call-and-text only and do not support internet access, apps, or cameras. These must be chosen from the list of suggested devices at <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives>
- From January 2026 onwards, only approved 'dumb' phones will be permitted in Years 7 and 8. From September 2026, this applies to Year 9 as well.

## 4. Use in Boarding Houses

Whilst we do all we can to support and care for our students who live on site, we recognise that living away from home comes with barriers. For students who board:

- The above year group restrictions also apply within the **boarding house environment**.
- Year 7 and Year 8 boarders are **not permitted smartphones** at any time, including evenings and weekends.
- During the **transition period** (Sept–Dec 2025), Year 8 boarders may retain an approved 'dumb' phone only.
- From **September 2026, Year 9 boarders will also be required to comply** with the full smartphone ban.
- We encourage parents to source suitable devices <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives>, that permits video calling but restricts internet and app access.
- **Year 10 boarders and above** may use smartphones **only outside of the academic day**, in line with boarding house protocols. Usage will be monitored to ensure healthy digital habits, especially around prep time and sleep hygiene.
- Mobile devices must be handed in to Boarding Staff overnight, as per boarding protocols, and are not permitted during prep or after "lights out".
- House Staff will provide clear guidance on appropriate times and locations for using permitted devices to contact home, in line with safeguarding procedures.
- A landline or supervised digital means will be available for students to contact family as needed.

## 5. Online Safety and Digital Literacy Education

The school is committed to educating students about online safety, responsible technology use, and digital citizenship. To support this:

- Online safety is embedded across the **PSHE curriculum**, including specific teaching around cyberbullying, privacy, digital footprints, screen time, and peer pressure online.
- **Weekly tutor time** sessions and **assemblies** will regularly address online conduct, responsible use of technology, and current digital safeguarding themes.
- The school will participate in national initiatives such as **Safer Internet Day** and work with partners like **NSPCC**, **CEOP**, and **Childnet** to enhance the quality of education around digital risks.
- The school will work proactively with parents to share guidance and updates on online trends, recommended settings, and parental controls.

These learning experiences are designed not only to support the phone policy but also to prepare students to navigate online spaces safely, responsibly, and confidently.

## 6. Sanctions for Breach of Policy

If a student is found using or accessing a prohibited phone or using any phone in violation of the rules:

- **First Incident:** The phone will be confiscated by and will only be returned to a parent/carer. A behaviour log will be recorded.
- **Second Incident:** The phone will be confiscated and will only be returned to a parent/carer. An after school detention will be set.
- **Subsequent Incidents:** Further sanctions will apply in line with the school's behaviour and boarding conduct policies, which may include a fixed-term ban on bringing any phone to school or the boarding house.

## 7. Exceptions

Any exceptions to this policy (e.g. for medical reasons or SEND-related needs) must be agreed in advance with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and evidenced through an Individual Health or Support Plan.

## 8. Communication with Parents/Carers

Parents are asked not to contact students during the school day via their mobile phones. In case of emergency, contact should be made via the school office or boarding house reception. The first point of call for parents is always their child's tutor when it is not an emergency.

## 10. Mobile Phone Use by Staff

Staff must model responsible use of mobile phones and follow school safeguarding expectations. Mobile phones should not be used for personal reasons during lessons or when supervising students, except in emergencies.

### **Key expectations for staff include:**

- Staff are permitted to use their personal devices in a professional capacity, including taking registers and sending emails during the school day.
- They should minimise the use of their phones in front of students and colleagues.
- The school aims to celebrate our students' achievements and thus staff are permitted to use their own devices to take photos and access social media, but images must be immediately deleted from their personal device.
- Personal devices must not be used to communicate with students.
- Any safeguarding concerns relating to mobile phone use must be reported immediately in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Staff must ensure that their mobile phone use does not compromise their professionalism, the school's reputation, or student wellbeing.

## 11. Mobile phone use by volunteers

Volunteers and visitors to the school site includes parents/carers, governors and contractors. These groups 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 pupils, 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 pupils

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.

## 12. Policy Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to any legislative changes, safeguarding developments, or shifts in school community feedback.