Mobile Phone and Smart Technology Policy

Ringmer Primary and Nursery School

Created by: Anna Crompton	**Date:** July 2026
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Next review due by: July 2027	
Amendments	

Mobile Phone and Smart Technology Policy

1. Introduction and Core Purpose

At Ringmer Primary and Nursery School (RP&NS), we are committed to providing a calm, safe, and supportive learning environment that maximises focus and minimises classroom disruption, anxiety, and online bullying.

In line with statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), **Ringmer Primary and Nursery School is a mobile phone-free environment by default - provision in this school does not require access to a mobile phone.** This policy sets out clear, consistent expectations to ensure that mobile phones and smart devices do not distract from the education, welfare, and safety of our pupils.

2. Scope and Definition of Devices

This policy applies to all pupils while on school premises during the school day, which includes:

- Lessons and classroom time.
- Passing times between activities.
- Breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Covered Technology

References to "mobile phones" include standard mobile devices and any other communication or smart technology with similar functionality. This encompasses:

- **Dumbphones** (feature phones without internet access).
- **Smartphones** and tablets.
- **Smartwatches** or any wearable technology capable of sending/receiving notifications, messages, or recording audio and video via mobile networks.

Please Note: In alignment with our ICT Acceptable Use policies, any personal laptops or learning tablets must only be used for strict educational purposes.

3. The Dumbphone Rule & General Intent

Having a mobile phone at school is recognised as both a privilege and a responsibility. Pupils are permitted to bring a device to school *only* to communicate with their families or carers after school hours when necessary.

To significantly reduce digital distractions and online safeguarding risks and to support the decrease in access to online devices outside of school, pupils are only permitted to bring a smartphone-free device (dumbphone) into school. Smartphones are strictly prohibited from being brought onto school grounds by pupils.

4. Daily Procedures and Rules

When a pupil brings an approved smartphone-free device onto school premises, they must adhere to the following rules:

- **Arriving and Leaving:** Pupils must turn their phones completely off when they arrive at the school gate and ensure they remain turned off for the duration of the school day. Devices must not be turned back on or used until the pupil is outside of the school gates at the end of the day.
- **Storage:** During the school day, all phones must be handed over and securely stored in a box or another safe place provided by the classroom teacher.
- **In-School Use:** Pupils must not use their devices while at school for any reason, unless explicitly instructed or asked to do so by an adult.
- **Privacy and Security:** Pupils must never share their phone number with other children without explicit permission from their parents. They must also keep their pin, password, or access information entirely confidential to prevent others from using the device.
- **Media Restrictions:** Pupils are strictly prohibited from using their devices to make videos or take photos of themselves or other children while in, or near, the school grounds.

5. Adaptations, Medical Adjustments, and Flexibility

The school complies fully with its legal duties under the **Equality Act 2010** and the **Children and Families Act 2014**.

- **Reasonable Adjustments for Disabilities:** If a disabled pupil requires access to a mobile phone to avoid a substantial disadvantage, this will be assessed and accommodated as a reasonable adjustment.
- **Medical Conditions:** Pupils managing medical conditions (e.g., continuous glucose monitoring for diabetes linked to a mobile application) will be permitted to use their device as necessary to manage their health effectively.
- **Individual Circumstances:** Adaptations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for pupils with unique home circumstances, such as young carers.

Note: Any approved flexibility does not grant an exemption from all rules. Specific practices will be arranged to ensure these pupils use their devices for their intended purpose only, at specific times and locations (e.g., in a designated school office).

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of Staff

- **Consistent Enforcement:** All staff members are required to consistently and fairly enforce this mobile phone policy across all year groups.
- **Role Modelling:** To empower staff to challenge pupils effectively, staff must not use their own personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. Staff may only use devices in front of pupils for explicit professional reasons (e.g., multi-factor authentication, issuing rewards/sanctions, or setting homework).

The Role of Parents and Carers

- **Policy Reinforcement:** Parents are asked to talk about and reinforce this policy at home, helping children understand the risks of heavy phone usage and the mental and academic benefits of a phone-free school environment and a smartphone free school.
- **Contacting Your Child:** If a parent needs to reach their child urgently during the school day, they must not attempt to contact the child directly via mobile phone. Parents must contact the School Office, and staff will promptly relay messages or facilitate contact.

7. Sanctions, Confiscation, and Searching

Confiscation

If a pupil breaches this policy (e.g., a phone is seen, heard ringing in a bag, or used without permission), staff have the lawful authority to confiscate the device as a disciplinary penalty.

- The Headteacher backed by the DfE empowers staff to confiscate devices for a duration deemed proportionate to the breach.
- Under the law, staff are protected from liability for any loss or damage to confiscated items, provided they have acted lawfully.
- Liability Disclaimer: Aside from lawful confiscation protections, the school emphasizes that a pupil's phone remains their own responsibility; the school is not liable for any accidental loss, damage, or replacement/repair expenses incurred on school grounds.

Searching Pupils

The Headteacher and authorized staff hold a statutory power to search a pupil or their possessions if they have reasonable grounds to suspect the pupil is carrying a prohibited or unauthorised item. Mobile phones and unauthorized smart devices are formally designated as items that may be searched for under school rules.

- A pupil's phone may be searched by a member of the school Senior Leadership Team, with the pupil's consent and, if required, parental consent.

Content and Illegality

- **Policy Contravention:** Content found on a mobile phone that violates school policies may be deleted or requested to be deleted.
- **Criminal Offences:** If there is any suspicion that material on a mobile phone is illegal or provides evidence related to a criminal offence, the school will immediately hand the device over to the police for further investigation.
- **Safeguarding:** If misbehaviour involving a phone suggests a pupil is at risk of harm, staff will bypass standard sanctions and immediately initiate the school's Child Protection policy through the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

8. Trips and Extra-Curricular Activities

The school will determine specific guidelines regarding mobile phones for school trips and residential stays on a case-by-case basis. The overarching goal will always be to preserve the educational and social experience of the trip without digital distraction, while maintaining robust online safety oversight.

9. Policy Review and Communication

This policy is shared transparently with all staff, pupils, and parents at the start of each academic year and is readily accessible via the school office and website. It will be reviewed regularly to align with updated statutory safeguarding updates and DfE guidelines.