Mobile Phone Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy applies to Reed's School (RS) and Ripley Court School (RCS) both of which are part of the same charitable foundation. It sets out the expectations, procedures, and responsibilities governing the use of mobile phones and other smart devices by pupils at both schools. RS and RCS are distinct institutions serving different age groups, including Early Years at RCS, and their respective approaches to mobile phones reflect this. Sections of this policy that apply to one school only are clearly indicated. Where no such distinction is made, the provision applies to both schools.

1.2. This policy applies to all pupils whether day pupils or boarders, and to all staff, including self-employed staff and volunteers, in their enforcement of it.

1.3. RCS operates a strict approach to mobile phones due to the age of its pupils. Pupils are not permitted to bring a mobile phone to school at any time or on any trips.

1.4. The only exceptions to the rules are young carers and pupils exempt on medical grounds, who are issued with a pouch without a closure device, or signal blocking technology, to enable them to access health monitoring applications. See section 12.

2. Purpose

2.1. This policy sets out the School's approach to mobile phones and other personal smart devices (including, but not limited to, watches, glasses and other wearables). Its aim is to secure a calm, focused and safe environment in which pupils can learn, concentrate and develop healthy face-to-face relationships during the school day.

2.2. The School operates a mobile phone-free environment throughout the school day. This reflects the statutory guidance set out in the Department of Education's guidance "Mobile Phones in Schools", which is statutory from 29th June 2026. In addition to these requirements, the School adopts these expectations as a matter of considered policy because they support the behaviour, safeguarding and wellbeing outcomes the School values, and because they are consistent with the Independent School Standards against which the School is inspected.

2.3. In addition to the requirements of the statutory guidance, the School's decision to operate a mobile phone-free environment is grounded in evidence and in the RS School values of integrity, responsibility and independence.

2.4. This policy is designed to:

- protect learning time and support pupils in developing sustained concentration and academic focus
- support pupil mental health and wellbeing by reducing the social pressures associated with constant connectivity and social media use
- reduce the risk of cyberbullying, inappropriate recording and the sharing of harmful content
- strengthen face-to-face relationships and social interaction during the school day
- meet the School's safeguarding obligations under KCSIE 2026, the Independent School Standards, and other associated statutory guidance and regulation.

3. Definitions

3.1. The following definitions apply throughout:

- personal device: any mobile phone, smartwatch, wireless earbud/headphone, tablet or other smart device capable of communication, messaging, internet access, audio or visual recording. This includes but is not limited to smart glasses, smartphones, AirPods and equivalent wireless audio devices. School-issued or School-sanctioned laptops and tablets used for learning are governed separately (see Section 11). This does not apply to appropriate medical devices such as hearing aids for example.
- the school day: for all pupils, the period from arrival on the School site (or boarding school transport) in the morning, until departure at the end of the timetabled and co-curricular day. It includes breakfast club (RCS only), registration, lessons, transitions between lessons, assemblies, break, lunch, games and timetabled co-curricular activities. For RCS it also applies to after-school care including attendance at prep and Apres School.
- the teaching day (boarders): the academic and co-curricular day as above; boarders are subject to separate arrangements outside this period (see Section 9).
- designated Sixth Form areas (RS only): the spaces formally designated for Sixth Form use, currently the Sixth Form Centre atrium and café. No other location is a designated area unless confirmed in writing by the School.

4. Pupil Education on Mobile Phone Use (RS and RCS)

4.1. In line with the statutory guidance, the School is committed to ensuring that pupils understand both the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a phone-free environment. The School believes that pupils who understand the

reasoning behind the policy are better placed to internalise it and to exercise sound judgement about device use more broadly.

4.2. Pupils will be taught in an age appropriate way about the risks of mobile phone use: including loss of concentration, classroom disruption, cyberbullying, the sharing of harmful content, and the effects of social media on wellbeing; through appropriate curriculum and pastoral channels, including PSHE, tutor programmes and assemblies.

4.3. Pupils will also be taught the benefits of a phone-free environment and encouraged to see it as a positive and valuable feature of school life, not merely a restriction. This forms part of a wider commitment to developing pupils who can manage technology wisely and independently.

4.4. At the start of each academic year, and at appropriate intervals thereafter, all pupils will be reminded of the policy, the expectations it creates, and the consequences of breaching it. Guidance on the DfE's expectations relating to relationships, sex and health education; including online safety, data sharing and the effects of online behaviour, informs the content of the programme.

5. Forms 1-5 (Years 7-11): Locking Pouch System (RS)

5.1. The Baseline Expectation

All pupils in Forms 1-5 are required to use a personal locking pouch throughout the school day. From the moment pupils arrive on site, phones must be placed in the pouch and locked. Pupils carry the pouch with them; the phone remains physically inaccessible until the pupil leaves the School site at the end of the day. The end of the school day is defined as the time at which pupils leave the school site to go home.

5.2. Pouch Procedures

- pouches are to be immediately locked when pupils arrive on site at the start of the school day
- the pouch remains locked throughout lessons, transitions, break, lunch and all co-curricular activities
- pouches are unlocked at the wall-mounted unlocking stations at the point of departure from the School site at the end of the School day (from 3.50pm). Pupils may only unlock their phones when they depart the School site.
- Reception holds an unlocking device for pupils who need to leave site before 3.50pm with documented permission.
- each pouch is issued to the pupil and is for their personal use. Pupils should write their name in the space provided.

Forgotten pouch: If a pupil arrives without their pouch, they must hand their phone in to Reception at the start of the day. This will be treated as a confiscation, and the standard confiscation procedure will apply (see Section 7). Repeated failure to bring a pouch will be treated as a deliberate circumvention of the policy and will incur escalated sanctions.

Lost or damaged pouch: If a pouch is lost or damaged such that it no longer serves its purpose, parents/guardians will be charged for a replacement at the current replacement cost. Pupils should report a damaged or lost pouch to Reception as soon as possible. Attempting to circumvent the magnetic closure and causing damage will attract disciplinary sanctions.

Second devices: any pupil found to have brought a second or substitute phone or smart device to School in order to circumvent the pouch system will face serious disciplinary action. This will be treated as deliberate policy circumvention and escalated to the Head of Section and Senior Leadership Team.

Personal unlocking magnets: any pupil found to have brought an unlocking magnet on site will face serious disciplinary action. This will be treated as deliberate policy circumvention and escalated to the Head of Section and Senior Leadership Team.

5.3. Wireless Audio Devices

Wireless earbuds, AirPods and equivalent communication devices are subject to the same restriction as mobile phones. The statutory guidance includes mobile phones and smart devices (including smartwatches, glasses, wearables, tablets, headphones/earbuds and any device capable of recording, messaging or digital communication) within its scope.

It is not acceptable for pupils to walk around corridors or social spaces wearing or using wireless earbuds or headphones during the school day. Staff may confiscate these in the same way as a phone; the standard confiscation procedure applies.

5.4. Exam Venues

Mobile phones and all other personal electronic devices must not be brought into any exam venue under any circumstances. This applies to all public and internal examinations. The presence of a phone in an exam venue, whether switched off or not, will be treated as a potential break of examination regulations and will be reported to the relevant examination board. Pupils who have a medical condition which is monitored by their phone are permitted by the JCQ to have their phone with the invigilator in the exam room. Other pupils are advised to leave devices in their locker or with Reception before entering the exam room.

6. Confiscation and Enforcement (RS)

6.1. Confiscation Procedure

- any phone or personal device that is visible, audible or in active use outside the pouch during the school day will be confiscated immediately by any member of staff
- public confrontation should be avoided unless there is active defiance
- confiscated devices are taken to Reception as soon as reasonably possible, placed in a labelled bag (pupil's name, tutor group, date, time, confiscating staff member) and stored securely
- pupils collect confiscated devices from Reception at the end of the school day only. Staff do not return devices at the classroom door.
- no individual arrangements may be made by staff about when a device will be returned. The standard end-of-day collection applies in all cases.

6.2. Refusal to Hand Over a Device

- if a pupil refuses to hand over a device, staff must follow the guidance in the Search, Screen and Confiscate Policy, including giving repeated opportunities to hand the device over.
- the refusal is treated as an act of defiance and the relevant Head of Year/Section, DSL or Deputy Head (Pupils) should be contacted immediately.
- both the original phone breach and the subsequent defiance are recorded separately in the behaviour management system.

6.3. Consistency

Staff are expected to apply this policy consistently and without exception. There are no informal arrangements, personal deals or overlooked breaches. Consistency is essential to the policy's effectiveness and to the School's legal standing should a breach involve safeguarding.

7. Sanctions (RS)

7.1. Mobile phone breaches are addressed through the School's Behaviour, Rewards & Sanctions Policy sanctions ladder. The table below sets out the graduated response for Forms 1-5:

Stage	Trigger	Outcome

First breach	Device visible, in use, or outside pouch; failure to lock pouch.	Confiscation to Reception; collected end of day. Friday detention issued.
Second breach	Repeat breach within the same term.	Confiscation to Reception; collected end of day. Saturday detention. Meeting with Head of Section and parents/guardians.
Third breach	Further repeat or deliberate circumvention.	Confiscation to Reception; collected end of day. Internal exclusion. Phone not allowed in school. Meeting with Head of Section and parents/guardians.
Serious breach	Second device brought to School; deliberate damage to pouch; defiance.	Escalation to Deputy Head (pupils)/Headmaster. Further disciplinary action under Behaviour Policy.

8. Sixth Form (RS)

8.1. Sixth Form pupils are not subject to the locking pouch system. In recognition of their increased maturity and independence, they are permitted to use personal devices within the Sixth Form Centre atrium and café only. The following conditions apply:

- personal devices must not be used or visible in any other location on the School site, including corridors, the dining room, the library, sports facilities and general teaching areas.
- any device visible or in use outside the Sixth Form Centre will be confiscated immediately and without warning. The device will be held at Reception and collected at 3.50pm.
- Sixth Form pupils are subject to the same restrictions as Forms 1-5 in all lessons, assemblies and form time: devices must be off and out of sight.
- the same exam venue prohibition applies (see Section 5.4)
- wireless earbuds and headphones may not be worn in corridors or communal areas outside designated Sixth Form areas.
- repeat or serious breaches will be escalated through the Behaviour Policy and may result in loss of the Sixth Form device privilege.

8.2. This Sixth Form provision is designed not to undermine the whole-school policy. Sixth Form pupils are expected to model responsible device use and are visible to younger pupils. Misuse will therefore be treated with the same seriousness as a breach by any other pupil.

9. Boarding (RS)

9.1. Boarding pupils are subject to the same phone-free expectations as day pupils during the teaching day. Outside the teaching day, boarding pupils' use of personal devices is governed by the Boarding House rules and the relevant boarding policies, which set out arrangements for device use in the evening and at weekends that meet safeguarding and welfare standards.

9.2. In accordance with the statutory guidance and national minimum standards for boarding schools, the Boarding House arrangements ensure that boarders are able to contact their parents and families in private, at times that are mutually suitable, with appropriate regard for relevant time zones for international pupils. These arrangements are communicated to boarders and their families at the start of each academic year.

9.3. The Boarding House rules take precedence over this policy for out-of-hours use. Any conflict between the two should be raised with the relevant Heads of Boarding.

10. Transport, Trips and Residentials (RS)

10.1. School-Provided Transport to Fixtures and Activities

Pupils travelling on school-provided transport to, and from, sports fixtures, visits or co-curricular activities may, at the discretion of the accompanying member of staff, use their personal device during travel. This permission applies to the journey only and does not extend to the fixture venue, or any other part of the school day. The accompanying member of staff has authority to withdraw this permission at any time.

10.2. Overnight Trips and Residentials

The default position for overnight trips and residentials is that personal devices are not permitted. The trip leader may exercise discretion to permit limited use (for example, to allow pupils to contact home at agreed times), provided that:

- phones are locked in pouches until such time that the teacher in charge says phones can be removed from the pouches;
- a portable unlocking device is taken on the trip by the teacher in charge;
- the arrangements are recorded in the trip risk assessment;
- parents/guardians are notified of the applicable arrangements before departure;

- any permitted use is time limited.

Where devices are completely prohibited, arrangements for pupils to contact home using school phones or staff phones will be communicated to parents/guardians in advance.

In residential settings, staff must ensure that pupils are able to raise concerns with a member of staff about anything that has happened online. Where a pupil needs to show a device to a member of staff in connection with an online safety concern, the teacher in charge holds an unlocking device and may unlock the pupil's pouch for this specific purpose. The concern must be reported to the DSL on return.

11. School-Issued Devices and BYOD (RS)

11.1. School issued laptops and tablets, and personally owned laptops and tablets used under the School's BYOD programme, are governed by the ICT Acceptable Use Policy and the Online Safety Policy. They are not subject to the locking pouch system. Mobile phones may not form part of any BYOD agreement, in line with the statutory guidance.

12. Reasonable Adjustments (RS and RCS)

12.1. The School recognises that some pupils may require access to a personal device during the school day for documented medical, disability-related or welfare reasons (for example, diabetes monitoring equipment, communication aids or young carer responsibilities). In such cases:

- a reasonable adjustment plan will be agreed in advance between the pupil's parents/guardians, the relevant pastoral lead, Medical Centre(RS)/Office Manager (RCS), Academic Support(RS)/SenCo(RCS), and the Senior Leadership Team;
- the plan will specify the purpose, the permitted device(s), the times and conditions of access, and any supervision requirements;
- the adjustment will be time-limited and purpose-specific, not a general exemption from the policy;
- these documented pupils will use a pouch that does not lock or block electronic signals;
- staff will be informed of the specific arrangement via the pupil's pastoral record; confiscation will not apply where a pupil is acting in accordance with an agreed plan;
- the Medical Centre(RS)/Office Manager(RCS) and Academic Support(RS) /SenCo(RCS) hold unlocking devices for pouches in case of emergency.

12.2. The School's duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, and its duty to support pupils with medical conditions, are reflected in this provision. Each case is assessed on its own merits.

13. Search and Examination of Devices (RS)

13.1. Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a pupil's device contains material that may constitute a safeguarding concern, evidence of bullying, or material that is harmful or illegal, the School may search and, where appropriate, examine the device. The following safeguards apply:

- searches are authorised only by the Headmaster, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or Deputy Head (Pupils).
- the DSL is informed of any search where a safeguarding concern is a factor
- searches are conducted in line with the School's legal powers under the Independent School Standards and the statutory guidance in KCSIE 2026, and with reference to the Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools guidance, and with the School's policy.
- where illegal material (including indecent images of children) is discovered, the device will be preserved and the matter referred to the police without delay.
- parents/guardians will be informed unless doing so would compromise a safeguarding investigation.

13.2. **If the member of staff conducting the search suspects they may find an indecent image of a child, the member of staff should never intentionally view the image, and must never copy, print, share, store or save such images. When an incident might involve an indecent image of a child and/or video, the member of staff should confiscate the device, avoid looking at the device and refer the incident to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as the most appropriate person to advise on the School's response.**

13.3. Mobile phones and similar devices are identified in the School's Behaviour Policy and in the Search, Screen and Confiscate Policy, as items that can be searched for under the School's behaviour and disciplinary powers.

13.4. Where a pupil needs to show a member of staff something on their device in connection with an online safety concern; for example, evidence of cyberbullying or harmful content received online, the pupil should report the matter to their tutor, Head of Section, Deputy Head (Pupils) or the DSL. Reception holds an unlocking device, and the DSL or a designated pastoral lead may unlock the pupil's pouch for this specific purpose. The concern must be recorded and actioned through the standard safeguarding procedures.

14. Harmful Use and Safeguarding (RS and RCS)

14.1. Any use of a personal device that raises a safeguarding concern will be treated as a child protection matter in addition to a conduct matter. This includes but is not limited to:

- the taking or sharing of intimate or sexual images of any person, including other pupils;
- cyberbullying, online harassment or the use of devices to intimidate, threaten or demean;
- the filming, photographing or recording of staff or pupils without consent;
- accessing, sharing or storing extremist, illegal or harmful content.

14.2. In all such cases, the matter must be reported immediately to the DSL and the standard confiscation procedure followed in parallel. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy govern the School's response.

15. Staff Responsibilities (RS and RCS)

15.1. All staff are responsible for enforcing this policy consistently and without exception. In addition:

- staff must not use personal mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day. There are legitimate occasions where a member of staff may use a mobile phone or similar device during the school day; for example, to issue homework or rewards and sanctions via a school platform, to use multi-factor authentication, in a genuine emergency, or when explicitly authorised for school photography within the School's Creating, Using and Storing Images of Pupils Policy. SLT will communicate clear expectations to staff on these permitted uses. This modelling of responsible device use is essential to the consistent enforcement of the policy.
- staff must not share personal telephone numbers with pupils. All communication with pupils must be through school-sanctioned channels ('hushed' app, school email, Teams or equivalent)
- staff should not use personal devices to film, photograph or record pupils unless explicitly authorised and in line with the School's Creating Using and Storing Images of Pupils Policy and Data Protection Policy. If any media is created, it should be uploaded to the relevant School's SharePoint site and immediately deleted from the personal device.
- any use of a personal device in the presence of pupils that is not covered by an authorised exception must be reported to the line manager.

- staff must pass on any questions raised by parents/guardians to Assistant Head (Digital Teaching & Learning) in a timely manner so that these can be addressed.

16. Parental Controls and Screen Time Restrictions (RS)

16.1. The locking pouch system constitutes the School's primary mechanism for ensuring that pupils in Forms 1-5 do not have access to their phones during the school day.

16.2. As an additional layer of support, parents/guardians are asked for their support by making appropriate use of the phone control tools available on their child's device. Where practical, these setting should be used to reduce access to distracting apps, limit notifications, and support the School's phone-free expectations during the school day, including after 3.50pm if a pupil remains on site.

16.3. The School recognises that parental control settings vary between devices and that families may already use these tools to support routines outside school hours, such as evening or overnight screen-time limits. Parents/guardians who would like guidance on configuring parental controls may contact the IT Department, who can advise on settings for IOS and Android devices.

16.4. Parental controls are a home-based measure and cannot be directly enforced by the School. The secure pouch system therefore remains the School's mechanism of control during the school day, with parental controls regarded as a helpful additional safeguard where they can be applied. Where a pupil repeatedly attempts to access, misuse, or circumvent the mobile phone system, the School may ask parents/guardians to review the parental control settings on the device as part of a wider behaviour support response.

17. Communication with Parents/Guardians (RS and RCS)

17.1. The School will communicate this policy clearly to all parents/guardians at the start of each academic year and on entry to the School. Parents/guardians are asked to:

- ensure their child understands and complies with this policy
- contact Reception (not their child directly) if they need to pass an urgent message to their child during the school day
- activate parental controls on their child's device in line with Section 16
- support the School in treating any confiscation as a consequence of their child's choice to breach the policy, not as a punitive measure by the School

17.2. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to discuss both the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a phone-free school environment with their child, reinforcing the School's approach at home. Where parents/guardians have questions or concerns about the policy, these should be raised with the School in the first instance; staff will respond in a timely manner.

17.3. The School will publish this policy on its website. Updates to the policy will be communicated to parents/guardians by letter or email before they take effect.

18. Regulatory Framework and Review (RS and RCS)

18.1. Guidance and Legislation

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK - DfE statutory guidance (updated 29 June 2026)
- Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026 – DfE statutory guidance (September 2026)
- Independent School Standards – DfE (2026 edition)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation – DfE guidance
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill
- The Equality Act 2010, in respect of reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities or medical needs.

The School's governing body ensures that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and regularly reviewed, in line with KCSIE 2026, to prevent access to harmful or inappropriate content. This is set out further in the Online Safety Policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

18.2. Linked Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies:

Policy	Relevance
Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (RS or RCS as relevant)	Governs the School's response to harmful or safeguarding-related use of mobile devices, including the search and examination of devices and referral procedures
Online Safety Policy (RS or RCS as relevant)	Sets out expectations for responsible use of technology, internet safety, and the management of online risks, including those arising from mobile phone use. Also covers the School's filtering and monitoring arrangements.
Anti-Bullying Policy (RS or RCS as relevant)	Addresses cyberbullying and the misuse of mobile devices and social media to harass, intimidate or harm members of the school community.

Behaviour, Rewards & Sanctions Policy (RS or RCS as relevant)	Provides the sanctions framework within which mobile phone breaches are addressed, including the graduated sanctions ladder and escalation procedures. Mobile phones and similar devices are identified in the RS Behaviour Policy as items that may be searched for.
Search, Screen & Confiscate Policy (RS only)	Covers the items that can be searched for, steps to be taken before a pupil is searched, systems to be completed to record a search has taken place and contact with parents.

Compiled by: Assistant Head (Digital Teaching and Learning)	**Revision Number:** 01 (Autumn 2026)
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Revision History Table

Revision Number	Section/Paragraph number	Amendments
01 – Autumn 2026		New policy