



RIDGEWOOD
SCHOOL

Mobile Phone Policy 2026-2027

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1.0	JGS	New Policy	AGB	Sept 26	Sept 27

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1. Aims

At Ridgewood School we are committed to creating a learning environment where every student can thrive. Our young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many exciting opportunities – but also academic, emotional and social challenges. Our goal is to promote a focused and distraction-free learning environment whilst encouraging responsible use of technology.

To support this, we have introduced a mobile phone policy that incorporates the Yondr Programme.

<https://www.veryondr.com/>.

We believe that every student deserves the chance to experience a phone-free education. Yondr pouches provide a simple and secure way of supporting this approach across our school. This approach provides a balanced solution, ensuring young people retain possession of their phones while minimizing distractions during school hours. The pouches help foster social interaction, improve focus on learning, and reduce stress associated with phone use, all while maintaining communication for families during travel to and from school.

2. DfE Guidance

The Department for Education states that:

"All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only...schools should develop a mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (for example, the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video) throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime."

In relation to implementing this and ensuring that students adhere to the mobile free environment, the DfE advises:

"Schools should feel confident to use their power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty where their policy is clearly breached, for instance where a mobile phone is used by a pupil or is heard ringing in a pupil's bag. 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. Staff should consider whether the confiscation is proportionate and consider any special circumstances relevant to the case."

Headteachers are backed by DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices, if they consider it proportionate, for whatever length of time they deem proportionate. In considering whether a confiscation is a proportionate penalty, schools should consider what disciplinary outcome the confiscation is intended to achieve and whether there are other ways to achieve the same outcome, as well as the pupil's individual circumstances such as age and SEND, as explained in the behaviour in schools' guidance. Confiscation as a sanction can be an effective deterrent for a specific pupil or a general deterrent for all pupils at the school."

3. Mobile Phone Free School in Practice

3.1 Student Phone Policy & Guidelines

Our school is a phone-free community. Each student will be assigned a personal Yondr pouch, and they are responsible for bringing it to school daily and keeping it in good working condition. Phones and other wearable technology will be secured in the pouch upon arrival and remain there until the end of the school day.

3.2 Daily Process

Upon arrival, students will:

- Turn their phone off
- Place their phone and any wearable technology inside their Yondr pouch and lock it in the presence of school staff
- Keep the pouched phone with them throughout the school day and store it in their bag

At the end of the school day, students will unlock their pouch, retrieve their phone and technology, and re-close the pouch to protect the locking mechanism from damage. Pouches must be brought to and from school each day.

3.3 Procedures and Sanctions

Late Arrivals/Early Dismissals

Students arriving late or leaving early must pouch or unpouch their phones and wearable technology at Student Services.

Forgotten Pouches

If a student forgets their pouch, their phone will be collected and securely stored in Student Services until the end of the day. Parents/carers will be contacted and reminded of the procedures. Repeated instances will result in the pouch being treated as lost and a replacement fee of £18.00 will be charged.

Phone Use During the School Day

If a student is found in possession of a phone outside of their pouch on the school site, the phone will be confiscated and stored in Student Services. The phone will not be returned to the student directly and must be collected by a parent or carer. In addition to this the student will sit a 40-minute detention on the following school day. Further breaches may be subject to an increase in sanction.

Random searches may be conducted if teachers have concerns that a student has a mobile device on them that hasn't been secured into their pouch.

3.4 Damaged Pouches

Any attempt to tamper with the Yondr system, including use or possession of equipment that may interfere with their use, will be treated as a serious offence, resulting in a replacement fee of £18.00, confiscation of the device until a parent/carers is able to collect, along with other potential school disciplinary measures including Reflection and suspension.

If accidental damage occurs, students must report it immediately. If damage is discovered during checks and has not been reported, it may be considered intentional. The following may indicate intentional damage:

- Ripped or cut fabric
- Bent or cut pin
- Signs of force to the black locking mechanism
- Pen marks inside the pouch
- Pouch opening without a station
- Scuff marks on the black ball

The pouch should not be used as a replacement for a protective case and/or screen protector on a mobile device.

If a pouch appears to have been intentionally damaged, the mobile phone will be confiscated and held securely until a parent collects it from reception. Collection would need to be during school opening hours. The phone can be collected by another adult, provided we have written confirmation of the collection and photographic ID is provided by the person collecting.

Confiscated phones held overnight due to non-collection will be placed into a secure safe.

Until a new pouch is purchased the mobile phone would need to be handed into school each day and collected at the end of the school day, by the student.

3.5 Emergencies and Safeguarding

Communications During the School Day

Parents/carers who need to contact their child during the school day should do so via our Main Reception on 01302 783939. We will then pass this message onto your child.

Medical Conditions

Students who require access to their mobile devices for specific medical purposes will be provided with a medical pouch. Medical conditions include but are not limited to type 1 diabetes and the use of a pacemaker.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, mobile phone use is not permitted by students. If such an instance occurs students are to follow school safety procedures under staff guidance.

In an emergency situation, students will not be permitted to unpouch their mobile. Unauthorised use of a mobile phone, including making calls, messaging, social media activity, photography or filming, may compromise safety and will be treated as a breach of the school's behaviour policy.

Unauthorised phone use during such situations may:

- Delay emergency responses
- Spread misinformation
- Put students and staff at increased risk
- Disrupt coordinated safeguarding measures

The school will communicate with parents, carers and emergency services through established procedures to ensure accurate and timely information is shared. Parents and carers are asked not to contact students directly during an emergency.

Trips and Visits

The Department for Education advises that schools are to prohibit pupil access to mobile phones throughout the school day, including on educational trips and visits that take place during normal

school hours. However, it is for schools to determine how they wish to manage the use of mobile phones by pupils on residential trips and/or trips taking place outside of the normal school day.

This information will be communicated with students and parents specifically for each trip/visit and may vary depending on the nature of the trip/visit.

4. Links to Other Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy