



Connection ● Communication ● Independence ● Aspiration

Mobile Phone Policy 2026

Redwood School Mobile Phone Policy (Updated 2026)

1. Purpose

Redwood School is committed to maintaining a calm, safe and distraction-free learning environment. In line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance that schools should be **mobile phone-free environments by default**, the use of mobile phones and smart devices on site is strictly controlled.

Mobile devices can distract from learning, undermine behaviour and pose significant safeguarding risks. This policy sets out how Redwood School manages mobile phones and smart devices in order to protect all learners.

To maintain a safe and secure environment, Redwood School prohibits not only mobile phones and smart devices but also any wearable technology capable of recording, photographing or filming (including AI-enabled glasses or similar devices). These items are treated as prohibited smart devices under this policy and must not be used at any time on the school sites. This ensures the continued protection of learners and staff from safeguarding risks associated with unauthorised recording.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Learners in **Years 7–11**
- **Sixth Form learners**, with clearly defined exceptions
- All **smart devices**, including mobile phones, smart watches and tablets
- **All times** from entering the school site until leaving at the end of the school day

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Learners in Years 7–11

Learners in Years 7–11 must **not use mobile phones or smart devices** at any time on the school site, unless explicit permission has been granted by the **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** under exceptional circumstances.

Where no approval has been granted, learners must either:

- Leave devices at home, **or**
- Place devices in a specialist **magnetic locking (maglock) pouch** immediately upon arrival at school

This reflects DfE guidance that mobile-phone-free environments should be the default, with exceptions that are **rare, justified and formally agreed**.

3.2 Sixth Form Learners

In line with DfE guidance allowing limited flexibility for older learners in exceptional circumstances, Redwood School adopts a **structured and supervised approach** for Sixth Form.

- Sixth Form learners must **also place their device in a magnetic locked pouch on arrival**
- Devices must stay in the **specialist magnetic locked pouch**, following effective practice used in similar specialist settings
- Learners may access their phones **only at lunchtime** and **only within designated Sixth Form areas**
- These areas are **actively monitored by staff**
- After lunchtime, devices must be returned to the locked pouch until the end of the school day

3.3 Prohibited Use (All Learners)

To protect learners and staff, the following are strictly prohibited at all times:

- Filming, photographing or audio recording others
- Sharing images, videos or recordings without consent
- Using devices to facilitate bullying, harassment or peer-to-peer conflict

These behaviours present serious safeguarding risks and reflect concerns identified nationally and within similar school policies.

3.4 Communication with Learners Requiring Direct Staff Contact (Microsoft Teams)

In certain circumstances, learners may require direct communication with staff outside of standard classroom-based provision. This may include, but is not limited to, **real work projects** or **personalised provision**.

In these cases, **Microsoft Teams** is the only approved platform for digital communication between staff and learners.

- Learners and staff may access Microsoft Teams via the app or browser using the learner's **allocated school email address**.
- Staff may set up **individual or group chats** with learners where this is necessary to support their provision.

Permissions and Authorisation

Use of Microsoft Teams for direct staff–learner communication is permitted **only with prior approval** from:

- The **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**
- The learner
- Parents/carers

This approval will be recorded and reviewed as appropriate.

Purpose and Appropriate Use

Microsoft Teams communication must be used **solely to share essential, provision-related information**, such as:

- Meeting times and locations
- Changes to arrangements
- Relevant information directly linked to the learner's provision
- 'check ins' regarding learners progress on work placements etc

Chats must not be used for social communication or informal conversations.

Safeguarding, Monitoring and Conduct

- All Microsoft Teams chats can be **monitored at any time** by SLT through the school IT team.
- Learners are expected to communicate **politely, respectfully, and appropriately** at all times.
- Offensive language, inappropriate content, or misuse of the chat function is not permitted.

Any inappropriate content or misuse will be **reported immediately** and managed in line with the **School Behaviour Policy** and safeguarding procedures where applicable.

Data Protection and Privacy

- Only school-issued email accounts are used.
- **No personal data** must be shared, including:
 - Mobile phone numbers
 - Personal email addresses
 - Home addresses
- Communication via Microsoft Teams ensures that **no personal contact details** are exchanged between staff and learners.

This approach ensures that learners can be supported effectively while maintaining **clear safeguarding boundaries**, transparency, and compliance with data protection expectations.

Use of School-Issued Mobile Phones (Independent Travel Training)

In limited and exceptional circumstances, staff may need to make direct contact with learners who are undertaking **Independent Travel Training** in order to support their safety, progress, or wellbeing.

Where digital communication is required:

- **Microsoft Teams must always be the first and preferred method of communication.**
- Use of a **school-issued mobile phone** to make or receive calls or send text messages to a learner is permitted **only where Microsoft Teams is not a viable or safe option** (for example, due to lack of internet access while travelling).

The following conditions **must be met at all times**:

- Only **school-issued mobile devices** may be used.
Personal mobile phones must **never** be used to contact learners.
- Contact must be **strictly limited** to essential, provision-related communication linked to Independent Travel Training (e.g. safety check-ins, changes to arrangements, or immediate support needs).
- **One-to-one communication only** is permitted.
Group text messages or group calls must not be used under any circumstances, to prevent the sharing of personal data between learners.
- No personal contact details (including personal mobile numbers) should be shared or stored outside of approved school systems.
- Communication must remain **professional, factual, and time-limited**, and must not include social or informal conversations.

Safeguarding and Oversight

- Use of school-issued mobile phones for learner contact during Independent Travel Training must be **authorised in advance by SLT**, with the agreement of the learner and parents/carers, where appropriate.
- Staff must follow all safeguarding expectations and report any concerns immediately in line with the School Safeguarding Policy.
- Records of contact may be requested and reviewed by SLT to ensure appropriate use and accountability.

This approach ensures that learners undertaking Independent Travel Training are appropriately supported while maintaining clear safeguarding boundaries, transparency, and compliance with data protection requirements.

4. Procedures

4.1 Handing in Devices

- Devices must be placed in a specialist **maglock pouch** immediately upon arrival
- Pouches remain with the learner and are only opened at **permitted times**

4.2 Exceptional Circumstances

SLT may approve limited mobile phone access where necessary, including for:

- Medical monitoring needs (e.g. diabetes management)
- Significant pastoral or safeguarding needs
- Specific learning experiences where learners are permitted to use their mobile phones (for example, when travelling, working in the community, or attending a work placement). Any such use must be agreed in advance by the provision lead or class teacher. Learners are expected to use their devices

responsibly and appropriately at all times; failure to do so may result in the phone being withdrawn and asked to be put away.

Any approval will be **time-limited, reviewed regularly** and recorded formally. This ensures reasonable adjustments are made where required, in line with DfE guidance.

4.3 Confiscation for Safeguarding or Behavioural Concerns

In line with established school practice:

- A device may be held by staff if it is used inappropriately or presents a safeguarding concern
- Content will only be viewed **when necessary, in the presence of the learner**
- Devices may be passed to the police in serious cases
- **Parents/carers will always be informed**

4.4 Responsibility for Devices

Redwood School cannot accept responsibility for mobile phones or smart devices that are **lost, damaged or stolen** while on the school site.

5. Expectations for Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Support Redwood's mobile-phone-free approach in line with DfE guidance
- Ensure learners leave devices at home or hand them in daily
- Understand that exceptions are approved **only by SLT**, and will be **rare and justified**
- Discuss safe and responsible device use at home

Sixth Form only:

Parents/carers must confirm their understanding and agreement with this policy via the school's online form:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=HUouCZ7reki1eNb9rEZ49bDjkcZ_VJhBmcwzhcFitcFUNExPVDZJUUVINVEhPTU9LSzk2MUJY0QVBRUS4u

6. Expectations for Staff

Staff are expected to:

- Model appropriate device use
- Apply this policy consistently and calmly
- Monitor designated Sixth Form phone-use areas
- Report concerns promptly to safeguarding or pastoral teams

7. When Expectations Are Not Met

If a learner (Years 7–11 or Sixth Form) does not meet the expectations of this policy:

- Staff will request the device; learners are given **up to three opportunities** to place it in the pouch
- If a learner does not comply, staff will respond **on a case-by-case basis**, usually including a phone call home
- Continued refusal will result in parents/carers being asked to attend school to collect the device
- A meeting with the pastoral team or class teacher may be arranged to review support needs
- Safeguarding concerns (e.g. recording others) will be managed through statutory safeguarding procedures
- Repeated issues may lead to additional pastoral interventions (e.g. supervised morning hand-ins or education on digital responsibility)

Searching and Confiscation

In line with government guidance published in **February 2026 (Mobile Phones in Schools – GOV.UK)**, Redwood School reserves the right to search learners and their belongings where there are reasonable grounds to believe a prohibited item, including a mobile phone, is present.

All searches will be conducted in accordance with **Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools – GOV.UK**, ensuring procedures are lawful, proportionate and respectful of learners' dignity.

This approach reflects the DfE expectation that mobile phone management should be grounded in **clear policy, consistency, parental partnership and supportive intervention**, rather than punitive measures.

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by SLT and governors and will consider:

- Updated DfE guidance
- Safeguarding and behaviour data
- Feedback from staff, learners and parents/carers
- Ofsted expectations regarding clarity and consistency of implementation

Redwood School Mobile Phone Rules – Learner Version

Years 7–11: No Mobile Phones in School

- You must not use a mobile phone or smart device in school
- You may only bring a phone if SLT has approved it for an exceptional reason

Otherwise: ✓ Leave your phone at home **OR**

✓ Place it in the magnetic locked pouch at the start of the day

Sixth Form: Limited, Supervised Phone Use

- Phones are kept securely in locked pouches
- You may use your phone **ONLY at lunchtime**
- You may use it **ONLY in Sixth Form designated areas**
- These areas are supervised by staff
- After lunch, phones are locked away again until home time

Mobile Phones Must Not Be Used To:

- Take photos, videos or recordings of anyone
- Share images or recordings
- Post or send anything that could upset or harm others

These behaviours can lead to serious safeguarding action.

If You Don't Follow the Rules

- Staff will ask you to hand in your phone
- You will be given three chances to do the right thing
- If you do not follow the school expectations, your parent/carer may be contacted
- Your parent/carer may need to come to school to collect the phone
- Safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously

Need to Contact Home?

Speak to a member of staff — we will help you.