



Ripon Grammar School

24 March 2026

Dear Parents/Guardians

I am writing to update and remind you of the school's rules with regard to smartphones and other smart technology such as smartwatches and laptops etc, defined by the DfE as *devices capable of receiving internet access, receive notifications/messages and with video and app store capabilities*.

On 19 February 2026 the Department for Education updated its guidance on mobile phones in schools declaring that, by default, schools should be 'mobile phone-free environments'. The new Ofsted framework also requires inspectors to consider the school's policy on mobile phones, the adherence of students to that policy and the role played by staff in the communication and enforcement of such a policy.

RGS already has a set of school rules which prohibits student access to mobile phones during the day. While phones are permitted on site – to allow communication home before or after school – the rules are that all phones ['smart' or 'non-smart'] are, at all times, switched off and kept in bags/blazers when anywhere on the school site. Students caught breaking this ban are placed in detention and will have their phones confiscated. At present we do not require phones to be handed in in the morning. We apply the context of the school and trust in the good behaviour of the students to adhere to the policy. This will remain under review.

The rules for 2025-26 and 2026-27 are stated here:

Year 7 [current] & Year 8 [from September 2026]

Students are permitted a non-smart [brick] phone on school site but it must be switched off and stored in a bag, locker or blazer. It may not be used on the school site at any time. Smartphones and laptops are not permitted on the school site unless as an agreed way of working for a SEND or medical need. Improper use will result in a detention and confiscation of the device, with collection by parents allowed from the following day. All smartwatches are prohibited

Years 9-11

As above, but students are permitted a smartphone on site.

Year 12-13

Students are permitted a smartphone or non-smart phone on school site which should usually be switched off and in a bag/blazer. Use of a device is permitted inside [or outside at the back of the sixth form centre], or in a lesson/private study for an approved educational reason. Students in Year 7-11 should not see Year 12-13 using their phones on the school site. This includes the use of earpods/earphones. Laptops may be brought to school and used in the sixth form centre,

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in a lesson or private study period. Improper use will result in a detention and confiscation with collection by the student at the end of the day. All smartwatches are prohibited.

Boarders

Boarders require the ability to communicate home with parents and so are permitted a smartphone or non-smart phone or laptop in the boarding house but times of use are strictly regulated and phones will be handed in at specific times dependent on age. As a result, all use of the phone network must be strictly age-appropriate and parents are expected to ensure requisite age restrictions are placed on phones.

In addition the following safeguards apply:

- The school will continue to educate students about the dangers of online content, appropriate usage and mental health considerations.
- All access to the internet in school is through appropriate filtering systems.
- Staff will remain vigilant to prohibited use of mobile phones and report/confiscate as appropriate.
- Mobile phones and other associated smart devices are items that can be searched for if there are reasonable grounds to suspect misuse.
- Decisions with regard to the use and control of mobile devices on school trips will be taken on the basis of the trip's purpose, the age of the students and the wider educational context. The school will take action to ensure that mobile phones do not disrupt the educational experience of the trip and will enforce sanctions for misuse. The school has two mobile phones with international coverage for visit leaders to use in the event they need to contact parents or school staff.

Further information about non-statutory guidance can be found here - [Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK](#) and here - [What the government's updated guidance on mobile phones means for school inspections – Ofsted: education](#)

I will be communicating this message to the head teachers of all primaries in the RGS catchment to inform their parents who may be considering RGS for secondary education.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Webb
Headmaster

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