

THE SYDNEY RUSSELL SCHOOL



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SET-UP. RESPECTFUL. SAFE

Mobile Phone Strategy

Updated February 2026



Rationale

Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore, the school strongly discourages the bringing of mobile phone to school by students.

However, we recognise that many students and their families own a mobile phone. We also recognise that some parents/guardians request that their child bring a mobile phone to school for before and after school safety reasons. The school is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below, as approved by the Governors.

Aims

To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones at our school. To outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

Guidelines

General Guidance - Safety

- **We urge students** to be careful when using their mobile phone in public places before and after school. Students must be aware of their surroundings at all times, particularly when crossing roads. Students must also be aware that using their phone publicly could make them a target for theft.
- **We urge parents** to closely monitor their child's mobile phone usage, both their engagement with social media platforms and their screen time. We recommend that parents:
 - only provide their child with a basic phone (sometimes known as a 'brick phone') that does not allow internet access, if the primary reason for having a phone is safety while unaccompanied in public.
 - do not allow their child access to social media until at least the age of 13. If social media use is permitted, parents should thoroughly check all platforms their child accesses daily. This should include all messages, deleted items and chats including group chats.
 - Remove their child's access to social media for a substantial period if they behave inappropriately online.
 - report any inappropriate behaviour on social media by their child or any other child who attends the school to the school, along with any available evidence (e.g. screenshots).
 - set a 'digital sunset'—a specific time each day after which their child is not allowed to use their phone. This should be at least 30 mins to an hour before their bedtime to help improve sleep quality.
 - after this 'digital sunset', parents should take their child's phone to ensure it is not kept in the bedroom overnight. It should be charged in a different room.
 - limit overall screen time per day or week.

Further advice and guidance can be found at [Keeping children safe online | NSPCC](#)

Primary Students

- Reception-Year 5 students are not permitted to bring mobile phones on site.
- Year 6 students can bring in a mobile phone if travelling to/from school independently, but it must be left with staff in the secure box.

Secondary Students

- In general, students should not bring valuable items to school, as they can be easily lost or stolen, which is often stressful for any child.
- Mobile phones are brought to school entirely at the owner's risk. Students remain responsible for all of their personal effects whilst at school. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- There are no reasons why a student needs to have in their possession or use a mobile phone during the school day. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency the Front Office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.
- If a student's mobile phone is seen or heard at any time while on the school site, it will be confiscated and held at the Front Office. The device can be collected by the student after school on the next working day. This rule applies throughout the entirety of the student's time on site, including before and after school hours.
- If a device is confiscated on a Friday or the last day of school before a holiday and a parent would like their child to have it over the weekend/holiday, then it can be collected on the **same day** after school finished by a parent. Please note it cannot be collected by the child in this instance.

Use of phones for 16+ Students

- No phones are to be used during lesson time or study time.

Exceptions:

- Before school in the 16+ area only
- During break times in the 16+ area only

After school the 16+ area is for studying, so no phones are allowed from 3:00pm onwards.

When can headphones be used?

- When studying using a device such as a laptop or tablet
- If phones or headphones are seen outside of the 16+ area, they will be confiscated.

Secondary students during isolations

- Students who are sanctioned with an isolation are **not** permitted to have a mobile phone in their possession at any time during this sanction.
- Mobile phones must be given by students to the supervising member of staff at the start of the period of isolation and will be held in a secure safe until the end of the isolation period. Phones will be returned to them after they have completed the isolation period for that day. If a student fails their isolation then their phone will be returned to them before they go home for the day.

Parents

- For safeguarding reasons parents are advised not to use camera phones to take images on the school grounds unless permitted on special events such as Sports Days or school performances with the Principal's permission.
- Parents should not place images of other children taken at school on social media sites without permission from the parents involved.

Sanctions

If a student does not give their phone to a member of staff when it is being confiscated then this will be deemed a failure to follow instructions and the student will be sanctioned accordingly.

If a student in isolation fails to give their phone to the supervising member of staff to put in the safe at the start of their sanction then they will face a further sanction and may be searched in line with school policy.

If a student is persistently breaking the guidelines then this may result in further sanctions being put in place and/or them being banned from bringing a mobile phone onto the school grounds.

Inappropriate Use

Generally, a mobile phone will be used inappropriately if it:

- Disrupts or is likely to disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the operation of the school; or threatens or is likely to threaten the safety or well-being of any person; or is in breach of any law.
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones will include students using them to bully, intimidate or otherwise harass other people through phone calls, text messages, social media or any other application. This includes photographic and video content.

This type of misuse will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour Policy. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to intimidate, harass or offend another person. The school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

The procedures applying to the inappropriate use and security of mobile phones, apply equally to the inappropriate use of portable computer games, smartwatches and similar devices.

Exemptions

Exemptions of this policy can only be approved by the Principal and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Related articles:

[Schools in Enfield to implement smartphone-free policy | Enfield Council](#)

[Schools in Barnet to become smartphone-free - BBC News](#)

[Smartphone free childhood | Ealing Grid for Learning](#)

[About — Smartphone Free Childhood](#)