



REDDAM
— HOUSE —

BERKSHIRE

Mobile Device and Social Media Policy

Reddam House Berkshire is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, students and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Reddam House Berkshire.

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Introduction

Mobile phones are now part of modern society, and most students will now own a mobile phone. We understand that for safety reasons students will carry a mobile phone to contact parents/carers after school or before school; however, mobile phones can lead to several problems in school such as bullying, disruption to lessons and inappropriate web usage.

As a school, our priority is the safety and happiness of every student. We have a legal obligation to keep children safe from harm and ensure we exercise our duty of care to teach students how to keep themselves safe. In September 2021 the updated statutory guidance for schools, Keeping Children Safe in Education, put legal responsibility on schools to ensure we are actively supervising and monitoring what students are accessing online. This legal duty upon schools does not just relate to what students access in lessons on school computers, but also includes any content they might access on their phones via 3G and 4G.

Additional to this is the rise in mental health and disciplinary issues in all schools which directly relate to the use of mobile phones or social media is of great concern to us and our parent community.

With such a level of concern, school and parents working together, need to tackle this issue directly for the wellbeing of all our children. As a school we believe we must educate young people and ensure they are equipped to use technology and social media for their future lives and we will invest in more opportunities for this and extend this to parents, offering more support and guidance around the risks posed in online activity. As parents ourselves, we know that technology evolves so quickly it is incredibly difficult to know what new social media platform or mobile app is safe.

We feel that to do this, we need to restrict the access within school to mobile phones, in line with the concerns raised in our community. Our policy around mobile phones (and wearable technology) is therefore simple:

Mobile phone use will not be permitted in any area of the school at any time between the hours of 8.00am and 5.15pm, with the exception of 6th Form who may use phones in the 6th Form common room, or in exceptional circumstances may make a call outside the door on the South Terrace.

Mobile phones can have a use for students and being able to contact your child on the journey to and from school is critical in keeping them safe at these times. However, when students are at school there are other means of communication that can be used in the event of an emergency, if you need to contact your child during the school day, you should call the main reception on 0118 9748300 and the school has mechanisms in place to get messages to your child if necessary.

Guidelines for Mobile Device Use

Mobile devices may be brought to and from school under the following conditions, children under Year 6 must not bring mobile devices to school.

Year 6

- Immediately upon arrival at school, mobile devices must be switched off and given in to the Junior Admin office (or failing that, the form tutor). Students should collect their devices from the office before leaving to go home or to boarding. Students in Year 6 are not permitted to use phones in the drop off or pick up zones, before or after handing them in to Junior Admin.
- If it is necessary to contact parents, students should report to the school reception or ask a teacher who will supervise the call.
- No photographs of staff or other students may be taken on personal mobile devices. Photos/videos taken in the school or on school supervised trips or activities may never be posted by students on the Internet or any form of social media.

Years 7 - 11

- Mobile devices must be switched off when students arrive onsite from 8:00am and put away into bags or lockers –where they must remain until 4.00 pm if going straight home or 5.15pm if attending a club. They must not be kept in blazer pockets and must not be taken into changing rooms or bathrooms.
- Students should not be using mobiles in the school car park whilst waiting for collection, other than to briefly make contact with a parent/guardian.
- If it is necessary to contact parents, students should report to the school reception or ask a teacher who will supervise the call.
- No photographs of staff or other students may be taken on personal mobile devices. Photos/videos taken in the school or on school supervised trips or activities may never be posted by students on the Internet or any form of social media.

Sixth Form

- Mobile devices may be brought to school and kept out of sight in school bags. They must not be kept in blazer pockets and must not be taken into changing rooms or bathrooms.
- They **may be used** in the Sixth Form Centre and discreetly to make a call out of the back door onto the South Terrace.
- They must never be used outside the school buildings or anywhere else inside the school (other than common room and South terrace).
- Students should not be using mobiles in the school car park whilst waiting for collection, other than to briefly make contact with a parent/guardian.
- No photographs of staff or other students may be taken on personal mobile devices except under the direct supervision of a member of staff for educational purposes only. Photos/videos taken in the school or on school supervised trips or activities may never be posted by students on the Internet or any form of social media.
- In lessons, the devices should be switched off. However, they may be used at the discretion of the teacher, as an aid to learning.

Sanctions for misuse of mobile devices

Years 6 - 11

On the first occasion of abuse, the mobile device will be confiscated immediately and handed to the school reception where it can be collected at the end of the day. A demerit will be issued.

On the second and subsequent occasion, the mobile device will be confiscated immediately and handed to Reception where it can be collected at the end of the school day by a parent or guardian. Parents/guardians will be contacted by reception who will keep a log of confiscations.

In the case of persistent repeat offences, a meeting will be called with both students and parents to agree how to prevent further incidents.

Sixth Form

On the first occasion of misuse, the student will lose the Senior School privileges and will follow the same rules as Years 6 – 11.

On the next occasions, the phone will be confiscated and subsequent occasions will result in the phone being collected by a parent or guardian.

All Years

Occasions involving the taking of photos on school premises or activities including distributing of photos of students or staff members on Social Media or otherwise through the internet will result in an immediate ban on bringing in Mobile Devices to school.

Guidelines for Use of Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites can have enormous benefits. The aim of these guidelines is not to 'ban' our community from using Social Networking sites, but rather to establish a sensible set of guidelines and principles that protect the interests of students, staff, parents or guardians and the school. Social media sites are not available for students during school hours.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Counter-bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy, E-safety Policy, Acceptable Use Agreements and Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

Guidelines for Social Media Use

Students

Our community should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Content should not be posted online which is inappropriate, offensive, defamatory, or brings the School into disrepute. The Principal is the final arbiter in cases of dispute over these terms.
- Students and their parents/guardians should familiarise themselves with the security and privacy settings of the site in question, to ensure that only the intended recipients can view personal messages and photographs.
- Students are reminded that the taking of photographs or video in the school is prohibited from publication on social networking sites.
- Students should expect that any content posted on 'broadcast' media such as Twitter or Google+ may be monitored by the School.
- Staff may not be added as 'friends' or contacts. However, it is entirely acceptable to follow accounts designed for a specific purpose, such as a department Facebook or Instagram pages or Twitter feed.

Staff

The following brief points should be read in conjunction with the Staff Code of Conduct which offers further guidance.

- Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute.
- Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.
- Staff should remain mindful of their digital tattoo and exercise caution in all their use of social media or any other web-based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups.
- Staff must not contact students or ex-students, must not accept, or initiate friend requests nor follow student or ex-student accounts on any social media platform. Nor their family members.
- Staff must not make personal calls, Skype calls or similar nor post to personal social media sites or send emails from personal accounts during any times where students are present.

Parents and Guardians

The following brief points relate only to social media/online activity which involves members of our school community (e.g. closed parent WhatsApp groups), takes place on an open forum which could bring the school into disrepute (e.g. comments on a personal Facebook page which may be widely viewed) or involves students of the school.

Parents and guardians in our community are expected to support school safeguarding policies and to act as a positive role model to their child by ensuring that social networking sites are used responsibly.

- Parents and guardians are responsible for monitoring the use of social networking sites and are asked to bring to the attention of the school any inappropriate material or activity. We will be able to investigate only if the entire thread is provided please, not just individual comments out of context.
- Our focus is always on the potential safeguarding impact (including emotional consequences) on children of various actions, therefore, parents and guardians should seek the permission of a student's parents before engaging in any form of social networking activity with another student or indeed contacting them by phone, text or approaching them personally.
- Parents and guardians should not comment negatively on other children, 'playground' gossip can cause considerable emotional distress to children and sharing views or comments on children could be harmful.
- Parents and guardians are reminded to bring any comments or concerns directly to the school and not to lobby other parents or to share negative comments about the school or individual members of staff. Whilst we are all entitled to have our own views and opinions, we would like to ask that all members of our community consider how this may be misunderstood or misinterpreted when shared online and the possible impact and consequences of these actions.

Sanctions for Social Media/Online Misuse

The school will investigate all cases of unkindness or bullying which takes place on social media, however, due to the complex nature of these investigations, we will request that the entire thread of a conversation is present to the school, not just individual screenshots.

Where there is evidence of misuse, sanctions will be given in line with the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy and the Counter-Bullying Policy.

The following is an excerpt from the table of sanctions in the Student Code of Conduct and gives likely consequences for a variety of scenarios, this is illustrative not exhaustive.

Example Misdemeanour		Range of demerits given
Social Media / IT Misuse	Distributing images without consent (image dependant)	4 - 8
	Excluding students and discussing them on group chats	4
	Creation of unkind/modified image of another student (image dependant)	4 - 8
	Other breach of the Acceptable Use or Mobile Phone and Social Media Policies	Up to 12
	Accessing WiFi that is not permitted (only Student WiFi is allowed)	2 - 6
	Acting as an accomplice to any of the above	4
Bullying or harassment	Undirected use of discriminatory/abusive language	4
	Use of discriminatory/abusive language towards or about a member of the community	8
	Victimisation 1st infringement; refer to the School's Counter-bullying Policy.	4
	Victimisation 2nd infringement; refer to the School's Counter-bullying Policy.	4 - 8
	Acting as an accomplice to any of the above	4
Sexual misconduct	Pornography; accessing and / or distribution	8 - 12
	Use of discriminatory/abusive language towards or about a member of the community	8
	Sexual Harassment	8 - 12
	Sexual behaviour (consensual)	4 - 8
	Sexual behaviour (non-consensual)	12

Reminders Regarding Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be defined as "the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others" (Belsey, <http://www.cyberbullying.org/>). It is an aggressive, intentional act carried out repeatedly over time, often against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/ herself.

The following is taken from the Counter-Bullying Policy and should be noted in connection with Cyberbullying or unkindness online.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance has these top tips:

- Keep evidence of cyber bullying by saving messages and MSN conversations.
 - The school will investigate instances of alleged cyber-bullying. Please note, the entire thread of conversations and/or photos will be required to commence an investigation, we will not investigate individual comments out of context.
- Don't reply. Never retaliate but instead if a nasty message has been sent, block the bully, and report it to an adult they can trust.
 - Unkind comments, even in retaliation, will be treated seriously.
- Report it officially. Most websites and mobile phone operators have a place where you can report abuse. Students should be always encouraged to share anything they are uncomfortable with, with a trusted adult.
 - Students are reminded that if they see an unkind comment about someone else to please report it to an adult, not share it with the person who is the subject of the comment.
- Students are reminded to always respect others. *Be careful what you say and what you send.* Messages and images can be made public and could stay online forever.
 - If only kind or informative comments are made online, then there is no risk of a student's comments being misunderstood.
- Protect online accounts and mobile phone with a password – and **don't share** it with anyone.

Reminders regarding 'nudes and semi-nudes'

Full details of how the school deals with nudes and semi nudes can be found in the Child protection and Safeguarding Policy (September 2023).

It is important for students and their parents to note that creating and sharing sexual suggestive or explicit photos and videos of under-18s is illegal even when it is consensual **and/or** the student has shared an image of themselves.

When an incident involving nudes and semi nudes comes to the school's attention, including any suggestion of upskirting (typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm) the incident will be referred to the DSL as soon as possible and a referral may be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

An immediate referral to police and/or Children's Services should be made if at this initial stage:

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special educational needs)
- What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any student in the imagery is under 13
- There is reason to believe a young person is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example, the young person is presenting as self-harming or suicidal

The school will begin an investigation when permitted to do so by the relevant authorities and this will be dealt with under the Sexual Misconduct section of the Code of Conduct for Students.

If none of the above apply, then a school may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or Children's Services (a school can choose to escalate the incident at any time if further information/concerns come to light).

The decision to respond to the incident without involving the police or Children's Services would be made in cases when the DSL is confident that they have enough information to assess the risks to students involved and the risks can be managed within the school's pastoral support and disciplinary framework and, if appropriate, their local network of support.

If a student has shared imagery consensually, such as when in a romantic relationship, it is usually appropriate for the school to manage the incident directly. The incident would be treated as being covered by the section on Sexual Misconduct – Sexual Behaviour (Consensual).

Complaints

As with all issues of safety at Reddam House Berkshire, if a member of staff, a student or a parent/carer has a complaint or concern relating to e-safety prompt action will be taken to deal with it. Complaints should be addressed to the Head of School in the first instance, who will liaise with the Principal and undertake an investigation where appropriate. Please see the Complaints Policy for further information.

Incidents of or concerns around e-safety will be recorded using CPOMS (see Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy 2023) and reported to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead following the school's Safeguarding Policies.

