

Smartphone Usage Policy

The Rushmere Academy



September 2026

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TO BE REVIEWED:	SEPTEMBER 2027

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STATEMENT

In line with changes to the law about the use of smartphones within educational settings – released by the Government on 29th June 2026 under the ‘Children’s wellbeing and schools Act 2026’. The Rushmere Academy will be banning the use of these devices between 9.30am-2pm (inclusive of lessons, lunch and breaks) from 1st September 2026.

This policy applies to all learners in Key Stages 3 and 4.

KEY PRINCIPLES

At The Rushmere Academy, we recognise that while mobile phones are part of modern life, they have no place in the school day. Our aim is to ensure every student can learn, socialise and thrive in an environment free from the distractions and potential harms associated with smartphone use.

This policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible device use
- Support safeguarding and behaviour expectations
- Reduce risks linked to cyberbullying, harmful content and online exploitation
- Minimise lesson disruption and protect staff and student privacy

RELEVANT GUIDANCE

- DfE: Mobile Phones in Schools (2026)
- Behaviour in Schools and Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance
- Equality Act 2010 – reasonable adjustments for students with medical needs
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff will consistently enforce this protocol and address concerns raised by parents or students. Our Centre Coordinator will review the policy, ensure consistency, and hold staff, pupils and parents/carers accountable.

Use of Mobile Phones by Teaching Staff

- Staff must not use personal phones during lessons.
- Personal devices must not be used to process personal data or upload information into generative AI tools.
- Staff must never share personal contact details with pupils or parents, nor use personal devices to take photos or recordings.
- Personal phones may be used professionally only when necessary (e.g., trips), but not for contacting parents directly.

Use of Mobile Phones by Pupils (Years 7–11)

From September 2026, Rushmere will be a smartphone-free environment for all students in Years 7–11. This means:

- Smartphones are banned on site for all students in Years 7–11. These will be classed as a prohibited item and will be managed in line with our Behaviour Policy.

- Students may arrive with their Smartphone, but this must be handed in to the office upon entry to the building.
- Smartwatches of any kind are not permitted.
- GPS tracking devices (e.g., AirTags) are permitted if kept in the student's bag.

Confiscation and Consequences (Years 7–11)

If a student brings a smartphone or any smart device into the classrooms/communal areas, it will be confiscated and contact with the parent/carer will be made. Smart devices of any kind are classified as a prohibited item under our Behaviour Policy and possession of them in school is defined as serious unacceptable behaviour.

Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are taken seriously and dealt with immediately. In line with statutory guidance, the Centre Coordinator and authorised staff have the legal power to search a pupil or their possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect they are carrying a prohibited item.

Offence(s) for permitted phone

- The phone will be confiscated and may be collected by the student at the end of the school day from main reception. Parent/carers will be contacted.

Persistent offence(s) for permitted phone

- An email will be sent to home school/LA advising of persistent offending. Parents/carers will be invited in to collect the smartphone (for a meeting) and Rushmere reserves the right to implement a 'Behaviour contract' as per our behaviour policy if this continues.

Phones on School Trips

Mobile phones and smart devices are not permitted on school trips. This is to ensure student safety, reduce safeguarding risks, and maintain consistent expectations.

Exceptions and Special Circumstances

Medical Monitoring: Students requiring smartphone-linked medical monitoring (e.g., Type 1 diabetes, epilepsy) may receive an exemption. Parents/carers must meet with the Rushmere to agree an Individual Health Care Plan.

Use by Parents, Volunteers and Visitors

All adults on site must follow the same expectations as staff:

- No photos or recordings of pupils on personal devices
- No phone use in lessons or when working with pupils
- Use the school office as the primary point of contact for emergencies

Loss, Theft or Damage

Rushmere accepts no responsibility for lost, damaged or stolen devices. Confiscated phones will be stored securely until collection.

Monitoring and Review

Rushmere will review this policy regularly, considering:

- Behaviour and safeguarding data
- Feedback from staff, parents and pupils
- National guidance updates