



Friday 8th December 2023

Dear parent/carer,

## **ADVANCE NOTICE: Mobile Phone ban for pupils at Risedale School from January 2024**

As you may have seen in the news, the government has announced its intention to ban mobile phones for pupils in schools in England. Education Secretary Gillian Keegan has said:

*"Mobile phones can be a distraction in the classroom and can lead to a number of problems, such as cyberbullying, distracted learning, and increased anxiety. We believe that banning mobile phones from schools will create a better learning environment for all students."*

Risedale School, along with other local schools, will be following this guidance and in our school we will be enforcing the ban from January 2024. World agencies, such as UNESCO, have also stated the dangers and detrimental impact of mobile phones in the school environment (see below).

- [Mobile phone use to be banned in schools in England - GOV.UK](#)
- [UNESCO technology in education: a tool on whose terms?](#)

Other countries around the world have already completely banned mobile phones in schools, including Finland, France, The Netherlands and China with more set to follow. We understand that mobile phones are an important part of everyday life for many of us. However, we have ourselves found that pupils using their phones in school can become a source of cyberbullying, a distraction in the classroom, and a safeguarding issue. We have also seen an increase in the number of pupils using their phones to record and share videos of others without their permission. This is a serious safeguarding issue and we are committed to protecting all of our pupils.

From January 2024, pupils *will* be allowed to bring their phones to school, but they must be completely switched off at all times between 8:25am and 3:05pm whilst on school site. They must be kept in their bags and out of sight completely but it would be better for pupils simply not to bring their phones to school at all.

Any use of headphones (e.g. AirPods) by pupils, where these are not directly connected to their school laptop, will also be an indication of the use of a mobile phone device and the phone will be confiscated for any pupil seen to be wearing them. This includes break and lunchtimes. Sanctions will apply even if phones are seen but not used. Pupils who use their phones to monitor medical conditions in real-time, such as diabetes, will be allowed to continue to use their phones but only for the purpose of monitoring their medical condition.

All communications between the pupil and parents/carers must take place via the school admin team who are always happy to help and if necessary arrange for the pupil to talk directly to you. Please do not attempt to call or text pupils on their mobile phones during school hours as this will place undue pressure on children to use their phones to respond and could result in sanctions being imposed, such as confiscation of the device or ultimately isolations leading to suspensions for repeated defiance. Should your child call or text you during the day I would be extremely grateful if you could remind them not to and, if there is a concern, please phone the school office so that staff on site can immediately check on the pupil's wellbeing and report back to you.





The method of sanction for the use of a mobile phone will from January 2024 escalate as follows:

<b>First Time</b>	Mobile phone is confiscated and locked away in the phone safe. Parents/carers are notified. Pupil can collect at the end of the day.
<b>Second Time</b>	Mobile phone is confiscated and locked away in the phone safe. Parents/carers to be notified and a <b>break detention</b> is given. Parents/carers to collect phone from school.
<b>Third Time</b>	Mobile phone is confiscated and locked away in the phone safe. Parents/carers are notified and an <b>after school detention</b> is given. Parents/carers to collect phone from school.
<b>Fourth Time</b>	Pupil is <b>suspended from school</b> for repeated breaches of the school behaviour policy.

Please remind your children that failure to comply with a confiscation, even at stage 1, will immediately result in the sanctions being transferred to the “Defiance” category and will lead to a suspension more quickly. Pupils will be guided through the changes during assemblies. We know that this change for a few pupils and parents/carers will be difficult but we thank you in advance for your support. We believe that this change is in the best interests of all of our pupils and is also in direct response to the government’s directive to all schools. Some other local schools have already implemented the government’s ban.

We are committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment where all pupils can thrive. Pupils will still be able to use their school-issued Chromebook laptop device for online learning. This system is closely monitored and filtered through our firewall systems and this supports a safe and secure platform where inappropriate material is blocked. This is something we cannot do when pupils use their phones.

Please support the school, your child and our staff as we embark on this change. We know it will be hard for pupils, but if we work together we can make it work. Usual sanctions will apply and school policies will be updated in due course to reflect the changes.

**What parents/carers can do to support the ban:**

- Talk to your child about the ban and explain the reasons for it.
- Do not attempt to call or text your child during the school day and instead contact the office to pass on any urgent messages or if you have a concern about your child’s well-being.
- Help your child to develop healthy habits around mobile phone use and talk to them often about what they are using their phones for.
- Monitor your child’s communications via social media.
- Contact your child’s form tutor in the first instance if you have any questions or concerns about the ban before Jan 2024.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Yours sincerely,  
**Mr Colin D Scott**, Headteacher

