

Our mission is for every student to enjoy their youth.



Mobile Phone Policy

ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Educating for self-awareness, curiosity and integrity in a changing world

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Mobile Phone Policy

At RISS, our mission is to enable “every student to enjoy their youth,” and our vision is to educate “for self-awareness, curiosity, and integrity in a changing world.” Central to this mission is the RISS Mobile Phone Policy, a cornerstone of our strategy to align with these essential goals.

Recognising the substantial role of technology in education, RISS is steadfast in its commitment to integrating learning technology. This is not merely to transform teaching methods and facilitate learning, but also to cultivate essential skills and dispositions that will benefit our students now and in the future. In this endeavour, we are committed to fostering opportunities within an environment imbued with respect, responsibility, and security.

The 2025 version of our policy is adjusted following the latest guidelines from the Dutch government on mobile phone usage in secondary schools. It reflects our dedication to striking a balance between harnessing technological advancement and nurturing the well-being of our students.

Central to this updated policy is a focus on 'detox time' and 'connection' for students. This is a conscious effort to encourage students to disconnect from digital distractions, thereby engaging more deeply with their immediate surroundings and each other. This approach aims to fortify relationships and promote face-to-face interactions amongst students, fostering a more harmonious and secure school environment. In doing so, we strive to create a setting where mutual respect and personal growth are of utmost importance, equipping our students to confidently navigate a world that is constantly changing.

Definitions and Scope

1. **Parents, Carers, and Guardians:** Throughout this policy, any reference to ‘parents’ is inclusive of ‘parent’, ‘carer(s)’, and ‘guardian(s)’. This inclusive terminology is employed to recognise and respect the diverse family structures within our school community.
2. **Accessories:** Within the context of this policy, the term ‘accessories’ encompasses a range of electronic devices and peripherals. This includes, but is not limited to, headphones, Bluetooth speakers, EarPods, smart watches, loudspeakers, and adapters. The policy’s guidelines on mobile phone usage extend to these accessories, acknowledging their potential impact on the learning environment. Bluetooth technology makes it possible to access mobile devices not in sight.
3. **School Premises:** References to the ‘school’, ‘School Building’, or ‘premises’ within this policy are comprehensive. They encompass not only the main school building but also extend to include the top floor, the area behind the school, and the small basketball court on the Junior Campus. This broad definition ensures the policy’s applicability across all areas where students engage in school activities.

RISS Mobile Phone Policy: Rationale

At RISS, we adopt the principle of “**no see, no hear**” about the use of mobile phones and accessories in school. This principle is fundamental to our approach to managing mobile phone usage within the school environment. We acknowledge that mobile phones are a significant aspect of young people’s lives today. They offer considerable value, particularly when used under expert supervision for purposes such as education, social connections and interactions, information sharing, and ensuring safety.

- Students' engagement with mobile phones is predominantly confined to specific media and gaming platforms. This limited use can be counterproductive to their development of social skills, the ability to forge enduring relationships with peers, and their overall mental wellbeing.
- During their formative years, children require guidance to develop effective and positive interpersonal relationships. The omnipresence of mobile phones can sometimes detract from this crucial role of parents and schools, often shifting the focus from real-world interactions to virtual ones, thereby impacting children's social development.
- The complexities and emotional demands of virtual interactions via mobile phones are substantial. As such, both parents and the school must guide children, particularly in navigating challenging situations involving peers and influences from the online community. Direct dialogue and advice from caring adults are instrumental in shaping students’ interpersonal skills, which are vital both in and beyond the school setting.
- The virtual environments facilitated by mobile phones often remain unregulated, especially regarding the quality of language, interactions, and communication. The content exchanged in these settings does not consistently foster personal growth, relationship building, or learning.
- In terms of social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, SnapChat, and TikTok, the official terms of service stipulate that users should be 13 years of age or older. However, adherence to this guideline is not consistent among students and is often not monitored at home.
- Conflict resolution and management of misunderstandings within a mobile phone/social media setting are often handled ineffectively by young people. This can lead to poor choices in actions and language, and sometimes regrettable decisions made in the heat of the moment.
- RISS is committed to providing effective teaching and learning in a safe and caring atmosphere. The presence of mobile phones, even in silent mode, can disrupt this environment. Additionally, visual material obtained through mobile phones can be misused to abuse others.
- We believe in the safe and sensible use of mobile phones which does not disrupt learning or compromise students’ health and wellbeing. We also understand that our students grow and mature from Grade 6 to Grade 12, and we respect this process in the planning and implementation of this policy.
- This understanding of the impact of mobile phones on young people's social development and mental health is a key reason why the Dutch government has decided to act and implement a ban on the use of mobile phones in schools. The government's action aligns with our observations and concerns at RISS.

Student responsibilities - Junior Campus

The privilege to bring your mobile phone to school will continue within the below expectations:

1. **"No See No Hear"**: Students are required to keep their mobile phones and accessories in their school bags, not in pockets, jackets, or desks.
2. **Phones Off During Lessons and Breaks**: Mobile phones must be switched off during lessons and designated breaks, except as specified elsewhere in this policy.
3. **Communal Areas**: There are no designated areas in the junior school where students are allowed to have their phones with them during breaks or free periods.
4. **Limited Mobile Phone Use in Lessons**: The use of mobile phones in lessons is restricted and mainly allowed for supporting students' learning diversity (as determined by the school), administrative purposes by the teacher (logging into the school systems have to happen via phone) , and during health and safety emergencies.
5. **Accessories Restriction**: Accessories such as earphones are not permitted during the school day and in class, as they suggest that the student is using their mobile phone.
6. **Payment with Mobile Phones**: Students are allowed to use their mobile phones for payments in the canteens, but the phone must be returned to their bags immediately after the transaction is complete.
7. **Mobile Phone Use Before and After School**: Mobile phones and accessories can be used for personal use before entering and after leaving the RISS building. However, devices must be placed inside bags before entering the school premises. This includes all times when students are in the building.
8. **Restrictions on Photography and Recording**: No mobile phone or other device should be used to photograph, video, or record students or staff on the school premises without express permission from the staff and/or students involved. Parental permission is required for taking photographs/videos of underage students.

Student responsibility - Senior Campus

The mobile phone policy guidelines for the Senior Campus acknowledge senior students' maturity, and allow them to use their mobile phones and accessories during breaks and free study periods, provided their usage is non-disruptive. Any misuse or abuse of this privilege will lead to disciplinary actions as outlined on page 6 of this policy.

1. **"No See No Hear"**: Students are required to keep their mobile phones and accessories in their school bags, not in pockets, jackets, or desks during lessons and in the hallways.
2. **Limited Mobile Phone Use in Lessons**: The use of mobile phones in lessons is restricted and mainly allowed for supporting students' learning diversity (as determined by the school), administrative purposes by the teacher, and during health and safety emergencies.
3. **Accessories Restriction**: Accessories are not permitted during or between lessons in the classroom or in the hallways, as they suggest that the student is using their mobile phone in lessons.
4. **Restrictions on Photography and Recording**: No mobile phone or other device should be used to photograph, video, or record students or staff on the school premises without express permission from the staff and/or students and/or parents involved. Parental permission is required for taking photographs/videos of underage students.

RISS Mobile Phone Policy: Additional Guidelines

1. **Examination Rooms:** Mobile phones and accessories are strictly prohibited in examination rooms. Any breach of this rule will result in the invalidation of the examination in question and could potentially affect other examinations as well.
2. **Prohibited Equipment:** Equipment such as Bluetooth speakers, earphones, or any kind of loudspeaker is not permitted to be used by students within the school premises, unless permission has been sought and obtained beforehand.
3. **Consequences of Misuse:** Misuse or abuse of mobile phone privileges will invoke disciplinary actions as described on page 6 of this policy.
4. **Use of Drama Room:** Students wishing to practice dance moves or skits during breaks may use phones in the drama room. Permission must be obtained beforehand from the teacher on break duty.
5. **Responsibility for Devices:** Mobile phones and accessories are often valuable, and responsibility for these items always rests with the student. The school cannot accept financial responsibility for any damage, loss, or theft of these items.
6. **Procedure for Feeling Unwell:** Students who feel unwell must report to the school reception, which will then contact their home. Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones to make such calls independently. This policy ensures appropriate support and supervision and maintains a record of students leaving the school grounds.
7. **Emergency Communication:** In an emergency requiring communication with home, students must speak to a member of staff who will address the situation.

RISS Responsibilities and Practices

- **Engagement with School Community:** RISS is committed to ongoing collaboration with the school community, ensuring that our plans and actions regarding mobile phone use are met with understanding and cooperation.
- **Student Workshops on Social Media:** The school annually organises workshops to educate students about the effective and responsible use of social media.
- **Parental Information and Workshops:** Information on children's media safeguarding will be provided through bulletins, and workshops are organised for parents to support them in this area.
- **Support for Addiction and Counselling:** RISS will provide appropriate support and guidance for issues related to addiction and the need for counselling.
- **No Requirement for Mobile Phones in Lessons:** Students are not required to have a mobile phone for lessons. Alternatives like school tablets or computers will be made available.
- **Recognition of Parental Entitlement:** The school does not expect families to purchase a mobile phone for their children. This policy is communicated to teachers, who are aware of and respect this stance.
- **Emergency Communication Protocol:** In emergencies, parents should contact the school reception, not their child directly. A message will be delivered to the student, ensuring that adult support and privacy can be provided for the students.
- **Provision of Agendas:** The school will provide paper agendas for students in the JC to note their timetables and homework. Students will be trained in the optimal use of these agendas during Induction Week. Magister can also be used for checking this information at home.
- **Tablet and Laptop Usage:** Students are allowed to use their tablets or laptops during breaks for educational purposes or reading. However, gaming, gambling or social media use is not permitted. Any violation will result in the student being asked to close their device and meet with the head of the section. A follow-up email to parents and a note in Magister will be recorded.
- **Enforcement of Policy:** Actions as described on page 9 of this policy will be applied in case of policy violations.

Teacher Responsibilities and Practices

- **Consistent Implementation:** Teachers are responsible for ensuring the consistent implementation of this policy by verifying that students keep their mobile phones and accessories switched off and stored in their bags.
- **Application of the Call Process:** Teachers should apply the call process outlined in this policy fairly and consistently. This is particularly important when students fail to adhere to the “no see no hear” principle.
- **Reminding the Rationale:** Teachers should regularly remind students of the rationale behind regulating the use of mobile phones in school, reinforcing the importance of this policy.
- **Role Modelling:** Teachers are expected to act as role models in the appropriate use of mobile phones. Mobile phones should not be used in lessons unless required for clear administrative purposes or other designated reasons, nor during supervision times if not necessary for educational purposes.
- **Active Monitoring:** During lessons, teachers should be present and observant, closely monitoring students' work and activities, ensuring that students are not engaged in the unauthorised use of mobile phones.
- **Respecting Parental Decisions:** Teachers must respect the decision of parents not to provide their child with a mobile phone, and ensure that alternative means of communication and learning are available for these students when necessary.

Parental Responsibilities

1. **Supervision of Virtual Platforms:** Parents should be aware of their children's use of virtual platforms and establish clear expectations at home.
2. **Age Restrictions for Social Media:** Children below 13 years of age should not have accounts on platforms such as Instagram, Whatsapp, TikTok, SnapChat etc.
3. **Checking Terms and Conditions:** Parents are encouraged to review the terms and conditions of social media platforms.
4. **Discussion about Media Presence:** Regular conversations with children about their activities on media platforms are important.
5. **Weekly Checks of Virtual Platforms:** The school strongly suggests that parents should supervise their children's virtual platforms and take action when irregularities occur.
6. **Alertness to Inappropriate Conduct:** Parents need to be vigilant for any inappropriate conduct involving students and lead on a resolution for complex issues.
7. **Inappropriate Material on Media:** Parents should be alert for any inappropriate material shared in the media about their child or other members of the school community.
8. **Stopping Participation in Degrading Memes:** Parents should take action to stop their children's involvement in memes that degrade peers, teachers, or other members of the school community.
9. **Involving the School in Abusive Exchanges:** If parents become aware of any abusive, aggressive, or demeaning exchanges involving RISS students, they should involve the school and ensure that appropriate evidence is collected. Retaliation is discouraged.
10. **Collaboration with the School:** Parents must work with the school to solve situations related to students' online activities.
11. **Restrictions on Contacting Students During Lessons:** Parents should not phone or WhatsApp students during their lessons. Urgent messages should be communicated to the school administration staff.
12. **Responsibility for Mobile Phones:** Mobile phones are often valuable, and the responsibility for the mobile phone always rests with the student. The school cannot accept financial responsibility for any damage, loss, or theft.
13. **In the Netherlands,** the authority of schools to enforce policies and respond to incidents is confined strictly to school hours and within the school's physical facilities. Outside of these parameters, the school's responsibility does not extend to incidents or policy violations. However, the school will work with families as indicated in items 9 and 10 to maximise care, health and safety.

RISS Mobile Phone Policy: Actions and Consequences

We earnestly hope our students collaborate in adhering to this crucial policy, which aims to establish clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones and accessories. In instances where a student is found using their mobile phone and/or accessories at unauthorised times, the following steps will be taken:

- **First Call:** The student must take their mobile phone to the Principal's Office (Junior Campus) or the Deputy Principal's Office (Senior Campus) or the Reception (if the other options are not available) for safekeeping. The student must register the phone via a QR code, and will be issued a number for phone collection at the end of the day after their last lesson. A record of this incident will be made in Magister (MK). It is the student's responsibility to retrieve the phone.
- **Second Call:** Similar to the first call, an email will be sent to the parents, and another entry made in the Magister Logbook.
- **Third and Subsequent Calls:** We hope such a situation will not arise, as we expect students to understand and respect the policy. However, if it does occur, the student and parents will be invited to the school to discuss the situation and develop a course of action. This action recognises the school's right to set clear expectations for cooperation. A formal letter detailing the incident will be sent home and logged in the Magister, along with potential reparation activities.

Please note:

- **Possession of Multiple Phones:** If a student is found possessing more than one mobile phone with the intent to deceive staff, the phone(s) may be confiscated immediately. In this case, the student's parent/s will be required to attend a meeting with the Head of the Section/Deputy Principal to discuss the matter and retrieve the confiscated phone and/or accessories.

How this policy was informed

This current document is associated and aligned with the below policies found in our Key Document Section on our website:

- Policy - sources of information:
 - RISS vision, mission and values
 - RISS Teaching and Learning Policy
 - RISS Assessment Policy
 - RISS Child Protection Policy
 - RISS Privacy Policy
 - RISS Academic Integrity Policy
 - RISS Learning Technology Plan
 - RISS Acceptable Use of Technology Policy
 - RISS Handbook (latest online edition 2024-2025)
 - Mission, Vision and Core Values
 - www.thinkuknow.co.uk
 - RISS would like to thank International School Groningen and DISS for their contribution and support with this guide (July 2020).
 - Dutch Government Website - Banning Mobile Phones
- In addition, we would like to thank the following stakeholders for their support and participation during the consultation process.
 - Wolfert Directors
 - RISS Parents
 - RISS Teachers
 - RISS Student Council
 - Legal advice