

## Secondary Department

# Mobile Phone Policy

Created January 2024. Updated August 2024

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## Process

This policy has been developed by the secondary team in reaction to the government recommendations on the use of mobile phones in secondary schools that will come into force in January 2024. This policy focuses on the use of mobile phones and smart devices, and will form part of the development of a whole school policy on the use of devices.

## Rationale

In July of 2023, the Dutch government announced a ban on mobile phones from classrooms in order to address the disruption that they pose to learning ([Kennisnet](#)). This announcement reflects the [increasing amount of educational research](#) that has been conducted over the last decade that reveals the distraction mobile phones pose to the developing brain, the addictive nature of mobile phone use, and the rise in phenomena such as “digital dementia” that have severe learning and health impacts on young adolescents. Additionally, the ISE is mindful of the impact that incidences of abuse with mobile phones can have on the wellbeing of our students and staff.

We believe that in order to ensure that our learning community remains one focused on [high-quality learning](#) and the positive use of technology, that supporting students in limiting their screen time will better support our students’ academic, socio- and emotional- wellbeing. With these goals in mind, this policy aims to outline our approach to mobile phone and smart device use at the ISE.

## General Expectations

1. Mobile phones, which we define in this policy as including smart watches and other smart devices, are not to be used during school hours from 8:45 to 16:00, including breaks and lunch periods, to allow students to be able to focus on their learning.
2. Ideally, students leave smart devices, such as mobile phones and smart watches at home. Students who need the mobile phone for travel to/from school for safety reasons, must turn off their phones (not on silent and not on vibrate) for the duration of the school day and put them in their lockers at the start of the day. This rule similarly applies to students who come to school late.
3. The safety and security of the mobile phone will be the student’s responsibility at all times.
4. Students may not check their mobile phones during break or lunch times. They must remain in their locker.

5. Students may not take any smart devices, including mobile phones, into rooms where examinations are being held at any time.
6. Members of staff may ask students to use their mobile phones in lessons for educational purposes if required. Those members of staff are responsible for asking students to collect their phones from their lockers at the start of the lesson. They should then remind students to turn their phones off and return them to their locker before the end of the lesson.
7. Staff members are also asked to be mindful of this policy and only use their own mobile phones during lessons for educational purposes, such as attendance.
8. During school overnight trips, students are similarly encouraged not to bring their mobile phones. However, if students do bring their phones, school rules will apply throughout the duration of the trip. Mobile phones must be turned off and put away. Please note that phones may be collected by staff members during active hours of the trip, with set times during which students may use their phones depending on the trip and grade level.

## Breaches of the Policy

Any misuse of a mobile phone during school hours will be considered a breach of the student Code of Conduct and dealt with according to the consequences set out in this policy according to the severity of the breach.

Misuse of a mobile phone includes but may not be limited to:

- Not turning the phone off, so that it plays noises or vibrates from a locker during school hours.
- Not storing the phone in a locker.
- Checking the phone at break time or lunch.
- Refusing to switch a phone off or hand over the phone at the request of a member of staff.
- Using the phone in any way other than for the learning objective when allowed by a staff member for a lesson.
- Photographing or filming staff or students without their knowledge or permission.
- Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas.
- Bullying, harassing, humiliating or intimidating students or staff by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging.
- The use of a phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages).
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about ISE members of staff, the school or other students online.

Note that using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate staff and students, or to send or post inappropriate material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to others or with the deliberate intention of causing harm, will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time.

## Consequences

**First infraction** – Students will immediately take their mobile phone to the Student Team office where it will remain for the school day. Verbal warning and notification sent to the year tutor and student coordinator.

**Second infraction** – Students will immediately take their mobile phone to the Student Team office where it will remain for the school day. A Point of Information (POI) card will be sent home.

**Third infraction** – Students will immediately take their mobile phone to the Student Team office where it will remain for the school day. They will be asked to bring their phone to the Student Team office every day for five school days.

In addition, if a student has misused their mobile phone in a serious manner the repercussions may include the student being internally or externally suspended from the school.

Serious offences where a breach of the law is suspected may be reported to the police.

## Community Support

This policy has been written to protect the overall wellbeing and support the learning of our students. Our community can support this policy by the following recommendations:

### What students can do:

- Leave their mobile phone at home, or if needed for travel, turn off their phone when they come to school and leave it in their locker throughout the day.
- If students have their mobile phone in school ensure it is switched off at all times between 8:45 and 16:00.
- Make sure their laptop is charged and ready for lessons, and bring their charger as a backup only.
- Use their laptop responsibly according to the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy, e.g. no gaming or use of other communication apps on the laptop in replace of their mobile phone.
- Be fully responsible for the safety and security of their mobile phones at school.
- If there is an emergency and the student needs to contact their parents, they can go to the school office.

### What parents can do:

- Encourage their child not to take their mobile phone to school unless they are cycling or it is absolutely necessary for transport.
- Support the school in guiding their child to follow the policy as a measure of protecting their wellbeing.
- As a result of recent evidence about the impact of mobile phone use on mental and physical health, parents could consider buying their children a simple call/text phone (example: <https://www.thelightphone.com/>).
- If there is an emergency, contact the school office who will be able to communicate with the student.

### What staff can do:

- Ask the students to use their laptops for all class activities, like Kahoots, etc.
- If mobile phones are needed for a lesson, allow students the time to retrieve their phones from lockers at the start of the lesson and remind students to turn them off and return them to their locker before leaving the classroom at the end of the lesson.
- Be consistent. Always follow up if there has been an infraction.
- Be role models. Avoid using mobile phones in front of the students for reasons other than attendance or educational purposes that cannot be conducted on a laptop.

## What the school can do:

- Support students in developing their self-management skills to keep track of the time, their schedule, and their learning via means other than their mobile phone (e.g. apps on their laptop, paper schedules, more visible clocks, etc.).
- Provide students with a locker to store their mobile phone.
- Support parents and students who need to maintain contact during the day in cases of emergencies.
- Support parents and students with information sessions that support our policy and the research behind mobile phone use and its impact on adolescent learning and development.
- Support staff members in implementing the policy.

## Inclusion

Although our policy aims to support the wellbeing of students by limiting mobile phone use, we recognize the need for our students to feel safe while travelling to school on their own by bike or bus and the need to use mobile phones for learning in a positive way that demonstrates responsible digital citizenship. Thus we have developed a solution that allows students to have their phones for travel.

Additionally, the school will make exceptions through agreements and plans for students with learning or medical needs who need access to their phones during the school day. Key information regarding these students will be shared with staff as appropriate.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored by the Secondary student and curriculum teams and evaluated on a yearly basis.