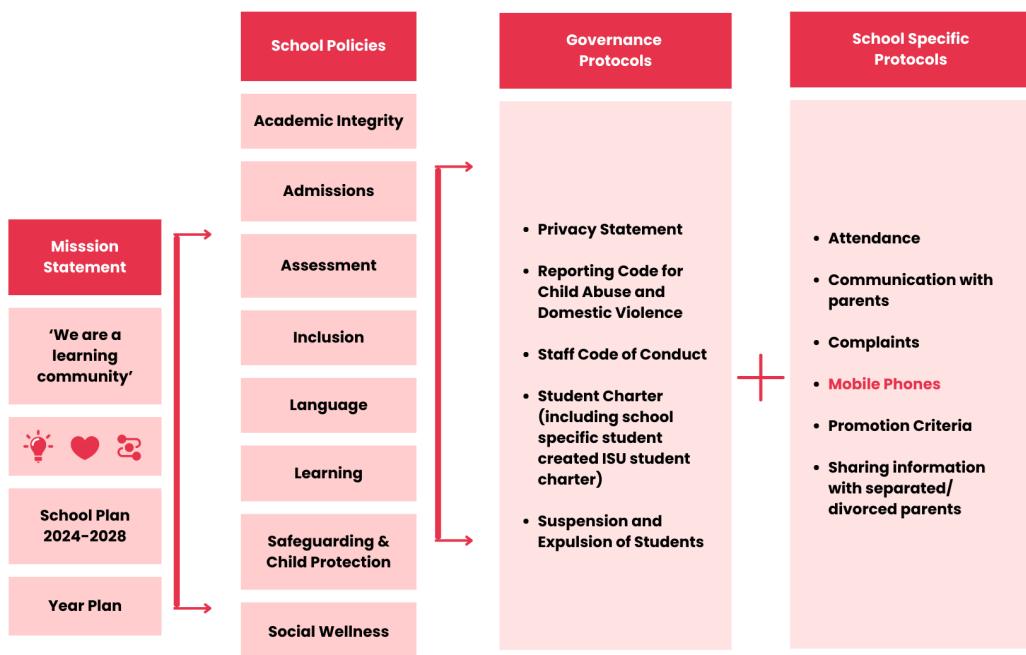


# Mobile Phones Protocol

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## 1. Definitions

For the purpose of this protocol, devices refer to all personal electronic equipment, including but not limited to:

- Mobile phones and smartphones
- Tablets
- Laptops, Chromebooks and similar portable computers
- Smartwatches and other wearable technology capable of communication, data transmission, or entertainment functions

## 2. General

While there is no legal framework, [the Dutch government strongly recommends](#) that from January 2024 all schools implement a protocol that will limit the phone and device usage for students in education. As a school we support an environment that limits the personal use of digital devices during learning. This protocol refers to all personal devices including phones, tablets and smartwatches. It also includes laptops during break times. The school's curriculum includes teaching students skills in digital literacy, online safety, and respectful relationships. Each subject has the power to promote this, but a lot will come via the well-being and digital citizenship curriculum.

At International School Utrecht (ISU) we believe that:

**Learning** is a lifelong journey of making new connections that deepen our understanding of the world. Meaningful learning builds on prior knowledge and is fuelled by curiosity, inspiring continuous growth and exploration.

**Global citizenship** starts with international-minded people who embrace diversity. Global citizens have an awareness, understanding, and acceptance of language, other cultures and beliefs as well as their own.

Limiting the distraction of mobile phones and smartwatches during lesson time helps students to focus on their learning, engage with their peers, and build the social connections that underpin empathy and intercultural understanding. Having no access to a mobile phone, or laptop during break and lunchtimes encourages conversation, play, and reflection, strengthening the sense of community which is needed to raise global citizens.

### **3. Aim**

To promote a high-quality teaching and learning environment where teachers can teach and students can learn free from distractions, personal use of devices is restricted during class. Limiting phones minimises interruptions, meaning students can focus on the lesson, engage actively, and collaborate face-to-face. Breaks at ISU are without screens. This is quality time for social interaction, physical activity, play, and real-world connections. This approach aligns with the IB philosophy, where technology is used purposefully to support inquiry and reflection. This way students develop Approaches to Learning, especially self-management, communication, and research skills and embody the Learner Profile attributes of being Balanced, Principled, and Communicators.

### **4. Review Cycle**

All policies are updated (where appropriate) at the end of each academic year. A formal policy review takes place every 4 years as part of the 4-year strategic School Plan cycle.

### **5. Scope**

This protocol applies to all members of the ISU community – students, staff, parents/caregivers, service providers and visitors – and outlines the expectations for the responsible use of phones and other personal digital devices on school premises.

#### **5.1. Primary students**

- We believe that primary children do not need a smartphone.
- In circumstances where a device is genuinely necessary – for example, when a child travels independently to and from school or attends an after-school activity – it must remain switched off and stored securely in the child's school bag throughout the day, including during lessons and break times.
- Communication between home and school should always take place through the school's Welcome Desk, not via a personal device.

#### **5.2. Secondary students**

- Students must store their phones in lockers during the school day, including lessons, breaks, and lunchtimes.
- Phones and other personal devices may only be used in white zones (as defined in Section 6) or under explicit teacher direction for learning purposes.
- Laptops may be used for classwork and study under supervision but are not permitted during breaks, unless otherwise agreed by a teacher in exceptional circumstances.

#### **5.3. Staff, parents /cargivers, service providers and visitors**

- Staff in a classroom environment may have their phone with them to perform registration or communication matters regarding students (Magister/ Parnassys/HelloID). They will be expected to place their phones out of sight once the task is performed.
- Parents/caregivers, service providers and visitors are requested to limit the use of mobile phones and other personal devices while in school or on the playground to model appropriate digital behaviour for students.

## 6. Zones

To ensure that everyone understands when and where devices may be used, the school operates two distinct **zones** during the school day (08:15–16:45). These zones apply to all students, staff, parents, service providers and visitors. For clarification, please view Appendix A.

### 6.1. Red zones – Device free areas

The use of phones or other personal devices is not permitted in red zones. This includes:

- Classrooms
- Corridors
- Study areas
- Toilets
- Outdoor playgrounds and courtyards

In Red Zones, all personal devices – including phones, laptops & tablets, – must remain stored and out of sight. This supports a focused learning environment and encourages students to engage with one another during break times.

### 6.2. White zones – Limited device use areas

The use of phones and other personal devices is permitted in designated white zones for legitimate communication or administrative purposes. This includes:

- The Welcome Desk area
- Staffrooms and offices

Staff may use devices in these areas for professional reasons, and students may use them only with staff permission, for example to contact parents or complete an approved task.

## 7. After school hours

After 14:30, students who need to wait in school can sit in the secondary library to have a place to work on their laptops (no phones or gaming).

## 8. Break times

ISU promotes a device-free break time across all year levels. Students spend a considerable part of their day using digital tools for learning and we believe that regular screen downtime supports emotional balance, reduces stress, and improves social connection.

## 9. Study areas

To support effective study and research, students may use laptops and other digital devices in designated study areas under supervision or with explicit teacher permission. These spaces are intended for quiet, purposeful work rather than social or recreational use.

During lessons, devices may be used in:

- Secondary Library
- DP study areas
- Classrooms, when authorised by a teacher
- PYP learning spaces, when devices are part of supervised learning activities

## 10. Exceptional Circumstances

Exemptions from the general device usage policy may be considered and granted by the Head of School, Head of Primary or Head of Secondary on a case-by-case basis under the following circumstances:

- The student uses their device to monitor or manage a medical condition, which must be documented in the student health and medical register.
- The device serves as an agreed adjustment for a student with a disability or learning difficulties, and this should be documented in the student's educational learning plan or support plan (for example graphic organisers).
- The student faces extenuating personal circumstances that require more immediate access to their device, such as being the primary caregiver for a child or family member.

If parents/caregivers wish to discuss an exemption request based on these exceptional circumstances, they should write a formal request to the Head of School, Head of Primary or Head of Secondary. Teachers may request students to collect or bring their phone to a class where it supports learning. Students will be required to place phones back in their lockers once the task is performed.

## 11. Consequences

Using a phone or device in school which goes against the school protocol will result in the following consequences.

### Primary

1. Warning  
If a student is caught with a phone or device in a zone where they are not allowed, they will have to immediately place it in their bag.
2. Confiscation  
Staff members may confiscate a phone or other personal device for repeated offences (same day or different days). Staff members will hand the phone in at the Welcome Desk. They then contact the Classroom Teacher. Classroom Teacher will speak to the student and contact parents to further discuss the situation.

### Secondary

1. Warning  
If a student is caught with a phone or other personal device in a zone where they are not allowed, they will have to immediately place it in their locker. Staff members may accompany the student to the location. If the student cannot open their locker they will be escorted to the Welcome Desk where they will hand in their phone to be collected at the end of their school day.
2. Confiscation  
Staff members may confiscate a phone or other personal device for repeated offences (same day or different days) if a secondary student is caught using it during prohibited times or zones. The phone will be given to either the Lead Mentors or the Welcome Desk. The phone or other personal device may be returned to the student at the end of the day. The staff member who confiscated the phone will inform the mentor.
3. Detention  
Repeated offence reports on Magister will be communicated to the Head of Secondary and a detention may be assigned. The student may be required to spend additional time at school, either before or after regular school hours. Parents will be called or invited for a conversation on behaviour.
4. Loss of privileges  
Students who repeatedly violate the mobile phone protocol may face the loss of privileges, such as the ability to bring a phone to school for a certain period of time.
5. Educational programmes or workshops  
ISU will require students who violate phone policies to attend educational programmes or workshops on responsible technology use, digital citizenship, or related topics.

It is important for students and parents to be aware of the specific rules and consequences outlined in the school's protocol regarding phone usage. Schools usually communicate these protocols at the beginning of the academic year, and adherence to the rules helps maintain a positive and focused learning environment.

## **12. Exclusions**

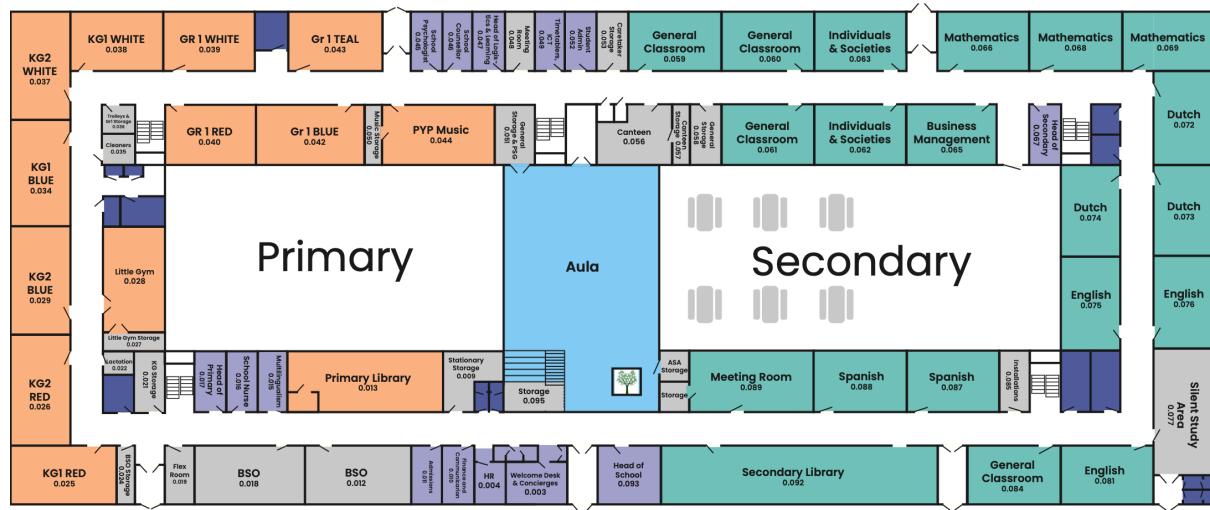
This policy does not apply to:

- Out-of-school-hours events
- Travelling to and from school
- School trips (separate information may be given)

## Appendix A

Floor maps of ISU, indicating Red Zones – Device free areas and White Zones– Limited device use areas.

## Ground Floor



White Zones – Limited device use areas: All offices and the area in front of the Welcome Desk. All other areas are Red Zones – Device free areas. Please note that in classrooms laptops are permitted if needed for the lesson; mobile phone are not.

## First Floor



- White Zones – Limited device use areas: All offices and the Staff Room (1.086)  
All other areas are Red Zones – Device free areas. Please note that in classrooms laptops are permitted if needed for the lesson; mobile phones are not.