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**RINGWOOD WALDORF SCHOOL**  
**DIGITAL MEDIA DEVICES POLICY (Students in Class 8 and above)**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The widespread ownership of Digital Media Devices (DMDs) among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents/guardians take steps to ensure that DMDs are used responsibly at school. This Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving DMDs can be clearly identified and addressed.
- 1.2. Ringwood Waldorf School has established the following Policy for DMDs that provides teachers, students, parents and carer's guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of DMDs during school hours.

Students and the parents and/or carers of students must read and understand the Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring DMDs to school.

- 1.3. The Policy for DMDs also applies to students during events outside school hours, school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities both on the school campus and off-site and at The Lantern.
- 1.4. For the purposes of this Policy, DMDs include all mobile phones, laptops, tablets, smart watches, iPods and any other such devices that are capable of connecting to the internet and/or a phone network, and/or Bluetooth or other wireless connection network; and/or recording images and/or audio; and/or storing images and/or audio; and/or displaying digital images and/or audio. This is regardless of digital or analogue signal.

**2. Rationale**

- 2.1. The school recognises that communication through DMDs is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.
- 2.2. Our School accepts that parents/guardians give their children DMDs; mobile phones in particular, to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. It is recognised that the concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school is somewhat alleviated by the possession of a DMD. It is also acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents/guardians reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

### **3. Responsibility**

- 3.1.** It is the responsibility of students who bring DMDs to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- 3.2.** The decision to provide a DMD to their children and allow them to bring them to school should be made by parents/guardians. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to understand the capabilities of the DMD and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.
- 3.3.** Parents/guardians should be aware if their child takes a DMD to school. It is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.
- 3.4.** Pupils are responsible for keeping the school informed of their current DMDs to aid return if lost on the school grounds.

### **4. Standard Procedure**

- 4.1.** Students are not permitted to use DMDs during school time.
- 4.2.** DMDs should be handed in to the school office at the start of the school day. They will be stored here securely until collection at the end of the day.
- 4.3.** Exceptions may be permitted only in exceptional circumstances if the parent/guardian or teacher specifically requests it. Such requests will be handled by the College of Teachers on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.4.** Applications for exceptions should be made in writing via the school office or emailed to [college@ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk](mailto:college@ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk)
- 4.5.** Parents/guardians are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office is a vital and appropriate point of contact and will ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way.
- 4.6.** Unauthorised (see Section 6.1.) DMDs will be confiscated.

### **5. Acceptable Use**

Where exceptions are permitted by the College of Teachers, the following rules for acceptable use should be followed.

- 5.1.** Mobile phones should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school (see below).
- 5.2.** Students should protect their phone numbers and email addresses by only giving them to close friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number or other contact details from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text, picture messages and emails.
- 5.3.** The use of personal DMDs in one lesson for a specific purpose does not mean

blanket usage is then acceptable. Permission granted to one student does not mean permission is granted to all students in the class, as learning support needs may be a factor. Permission may be revoked at any time by the teacher and is assumed to end at the end of the lesson, in which case the student should return their DMDs to the office for safe keeping.

- 5.4. DMDs must not be used without the express permission of the owner.

## **6. Unacceptable Uses**

- 6.1. Unless express permission has been granted in the specific circumstances described above (see Section 4.3.) any student mobile phones seen on site will be considered unauthorised.
- 6.2. The file sharing functions such as Bluetooth on a mobile phone must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones.
- 6.3. Using DMDs to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. In some cases it may constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence, it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.
- 6.4. It is forbidden for students to use their DMDs to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate others and then send the pictures to other or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using DMDs to photograph or film any student or member of staff without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use a DMD to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.
- 6.5. DMDs are not to be used or taken into changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.
- 6.6. It is unacceptable to take a picture of a member of staff without their express permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images.

## **7. Theft or damage**

- 7.1. Students should mark their DMDs clearly with their names.
- 7.2. To reduce the risk of theft, students who carry DMDs are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.
- 7.3. DMDs that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to front office reception.
- 7.4. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged DMDs.
- 7.5. The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their DMDs stolen or damaged while travelling to and from school.

- 7.6. It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pins to ensure that unauthorised phone calls or emails cannot be made on their DMDs (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pins confidential.
- 7.7. Lost and stolen mobile phones in the U.K. can be blocked across all networks making them virtually worthless because they cannot be used. In the event of a loss or theft this is strongly advised.

## **8. Other Inappropriate conduct**

- 8.1. DMDs are banned from all examinations. Students are expected to hand DMDs to invigilators before entering the exam. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.
- 8.2. Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a DMD will face disciplinary action.
- 8.3. Students with DMDs may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person/persons, or post private information about another persons using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images and phone calls etc. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action. *[It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.]*
- 8.4. Students must ensure that files stored on their DMDs do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence.
- 8.5. As our neighbours and due to the nature of The Lantern Community, the school considers that any use of a DMD thought inappropriate by the school as described above, is equally inappropriate at The Lantern and the same sanctions will apply in addition to any that might be brought by The Lantern Community.

## **9. Sanctions**

- 9.1. A teacher may confiscate any unauthorised DMD. The student must give the DMD to a teacher if requested. Under section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 a member of the Ringwood Waldorf School staff has the right to confiscate and retain a student's property as a disciplinary penalty where it is reasonable to do so.
- 9.2. A DMD may be confiscated for a period of time deemed appropriate by the confiscating teacher and is dependent on the nature of the incident and DMD. The maximum length of time is four weeks. Confiscation will typically range between 24 hours and a 1 week for most/first time infractions. The student will be informed of the duration of the confiscation period when the DMD is confiscated. Confiscated DMDs will be available for collection in the office after the confiscation period has elapsed.
- 9.3. A DMD will only be confiscated for more than 1 day in case of a very serious or

repeated breach of this policy.

- 9.4. Any student using a DMD without the express permission of the owner may face disciplinary action.
- 9.5. Teachers reserve the right to withdraw authorisation of all DMD usage at school for any individual that repeatedly or grossly infringes these rules. In such cases, the parent/guardian would be notified.
- 9.6. Infringements will be recorded and the parent/guardian may be asked to speak with representatives of the College and/or Upper School Faculty.
- 9.7. As set out in previous sections, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident of a serious nature being referred to the police for investigation. In such cases, the parent/guardian will be notified immediately.

#### 10. Mobile Phone: Parent/Guardian Permission

I have read and understood the above information about appropriate use of DMDs at Ringwood Waldorf School and I understand that this form will be kept on file at the school and that the details may be used (and shared with a third party, if necessary) to identify a DMD should the need arise (e.g. if lost, or if the DMD is being used inappropriately).

I give my child permission to carry DMDs that I provide them with to school and understand that if I do not wish my child to carry any particular DMDs, it is my responsibility not to provide them to my child. I understand that my child will be responsible for ensuring that any DMDs they use are used appropriately and correctly while under the school's supervision, as outlined in this document.

I understand that the school will not accept any responsibility for loss, damage or theft of a DMD.

Name of parent/guardian	Signature of parent/guardian...
Name of student	Signature of student...
DMD details: 1. Make and model number(s)..... .....	

2. Colour/description of DMD(s).....

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As this information may be used to help return lost property, please keep it updated at all times.