Our Mission Statement – the reason our College exists

"Learning & Growing in the Light of the Gospel"

With Christ at the centre of our learning, we:
- *Help young people to achieve their greatest potential*
- *Guide their intellectual growth, nurture their God-given talents, and inspire them to live in service to others*
- *Aim to develop honest, confident, responsible and compassionate members of society, based on the educational values of Blessed Antonio Rosmini*

Our Vision Statement – the long-term change resulting from our work

' Encouraging Big Ideas'

Ratcliffe's unique educational offering based on our College motto, "Legis Plenitudo Charitas", Love is the fulfilment of the Law, provides a perfect context within which young people may acquire the emotional knowledge and interpersonal skills necessary to live happy and purposeful lives. The College's inclusive Catholic ethos is complemented by the outstanding quality of our College community through which our Mission, "Learning and Growing in the Light of the Gospel", serves to nurture resilience and develop maturity. Young people leave Ratcliffe with a strong sense of who they are and their purpose in the world, equipped socially, emotionally, morally and spiritually to go forth and make a difference to the communities in which they live and work.

MOBILE PHONE AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

This policy has been written for all three sections of the School

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Rationale

Mobile phones and electronic devices are powerful tools, and we recognise the advantages and opportunities they provide to parents, students and staff. However, the potential disturbance to learning, and safeguarding and wellbeing concerns caused by mobile phones and electronic devices in a school environment are the overriding principles in formulating this policy. Students, in case of emergency need, are allowed to use a school phone at the Main School Reception or the Preparatory School Reception, where messages from parents to students are also able to be passed on. For all of these reasons we recommend that students do not bring mobile phones or smartwatches into school. This policy outlines the parameters and exceptions to this approach.

In February 2024, the Department for Education issued guidance to schools regarding the use of mobile phones and smartwatches. The guidance is clear that a school's approach to mobile phones and smartwatch use in school is that they should not be used by students during the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes. This includes boarders, who may access their mobile phones before and after school at designated times only.

The use of mobile phones, especially to access social media, carries attendant risks for children. These risks include access to inappropriate content such as pornography or prejudice-related posts, inappropriate behaviour online through group chats, over-sharing, and making friends with people they don't know. In a school context, mobile phones cause a loss of focus in lessons, classroom disruption, and can precipitate bullying or unkindness.

We recognise that that mobile technology allows cyberbullying and unkindness online to happen at any time. We also recognise that misuse of mobile technology can introduce young people to ideas which may lead to misbehaviour, unkindness or bullying. Our Anti-Bullying Policy, Child-on-Child Abuse Policy, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and the Positive Behaviour and Relationships Policy outlines how the College responds to such matters, but the College reserves the the right to take such as is reasonable with a view to regulating conduct when a student's use of mobile technology leads to misbehaviour or a pastoral or safeguarding concern inside school or outside of school.

Through PSHCE, Christian Living, Parent Cafes and other information sources, we will work with families to help educate young people about the safe use of mobile technology, reflecting Pope

Paul VI's teaching that "the family, which has the primary duty of imparting education, needs the help of the whole community."

In this policy we have attempted to find the most practical and effective response to the guidance of the Department for Education, and the evident problem that many young people have with their mobile phone use.

All mobile phones and electronic devices are brought to school at the owner's risk. Ratcliffe College bears no liability for any damage or loss incurred to a student's mobile phone or electronic device in school or whilst on a school trip. Parents are strongly advised not to allow students to bring these items to school. Where such devices are brought into school, it is strongly recommended that tracking features, such as Apple's "Find my" function, is activated.

Use of Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices in School

The School's position is that mobile phones may not be used, seen, or heard whilst in school.

1. Students in Nursery to Year 11 may not have a mobile phone in their possession during school hours. Possession means in their control, i.e. on their person, in bags, lockers or elsewhere where they can access it without the permission of a member of staff. Students in Years 12 and 13 may have a mobile phone in school but can only use their mobile phone at designated times in the Sixth Form Café and Lounge. Used, seen and heard means that if a student is found to be holding or using their mobile phone in school, which includes any audible notification or message sound, vibration, or visible flash of the device's light, it will be confiscated and taken by the member of staff to the Main School Reception or the Preparatory School Reception.

2. Where a parent or guardian wishes their child to bring a mobile phone to school, that phone must be left in Main School Reception or Preparatory School reception, where a student will be able to access it if required. This may be so that the student can make emergency contact with a family member during travel to and from school if they travel on the school bus, or to facilitate any individual needs, such as young carer responsibilities. A student needing to make a phone call should attend the Main School Reception or the Preparatory School Reception before school, at breaktime, lunchtime or teatime. Any parent/guardian can leave a message for their child with Main School Reception by contacting 01509 817000, and if a return call is required, the Receptionist will help to arrange this.

3. Students in the Senior School may bring mobile phones into school on Saturdays when involved in school fixtures, so that they can inform family members of collection times.

4. Mobile phones and electronic devices are not permitted on Preparatory School trips. Rules regarding mobile phone use on Senior School trips will be detailed in trip information letters, but the default position for all school trips is that mobile phones are not permitted.

5. We recognise that there may be some students for whom possession of a mobile phone during the school day is necessary for very good reasons, such as an ongoing medical reason. We will make reasonable adjustment to our Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy to cater for any students who require it, although mobile phone use will only be

permitted as far as is necessary. If this applies to a student, parents should contact their child's Head of Year or, in the Preparatory School, the Deputy Head of the Preparatory School.

6. Boarders may use their mobile phone or electronic device in the boarding houses and school corridors up to 8.15am and after Prep until such time as they are collected in the evening. They may not be used in the Chapel or Refectory.

7. The same expectations apply to smart watches. The College asks that students only wear a traditional watch to school.

8. Mobile phones or electronic devices such as Smart Watches must not be taken into an examination room during Public Examinations as this could result in a disqualification (see Public Examination Guidance for Students and Parents on the Ratcliffe College website).

9. The School cannot be held responsible for the security of any electronic device unless they have been handed into Boarding Staff or the Main School Reception for safekeeping.

10. The sending or recording of obscene or threatening messages is illegal, as are 999 calls when there is no emergency.

11. Possession of another person's mobile phone or electronic device, without permission, will be considered as theft and treated as such.

Sanctions

Failure to comply with the School's very reasonable guidelines will result in the following sanctions:

- A mobile phone or electronic device will be taken to the Main School Reception or Preparatory School Reception from where it can be collected at the end of the day (from 4.10pm). The Receptionist will require a family member or a member of boarding house staff to collect the confiscated device unless the student is travelling home on school transport at 6.10pm.
- In the Preparatory School, a student using their mobile phone in school would be asked to attend a meeting with their parents and the Headteacher of the Preparatory School and may be given an internal suspension.
- In the Senior School, a student using their mobile phone in school will receive a Friday after-school detention. The same would apply to any use of a smartwatch to access social media or messaging.

Where a student repeatedly fails to meet the School's very reasonable guidelines, escalation of sanction may follow as outlined in the Positive Behaviour and Relationships Policy. Additional sanction may include an educative response, a meeting with a parent to discuss the student's attitude towards the school's expectations, or a major sanction such as a Saturday detention or a fixed-term exclusion.

Due regard will also be given to any behavioural, pastoral, or safeguarding concern that arises because of the student's misuse of a mobile phone or electronic device. Therefore, the School's response may also be guided by other policies, such as the Anti-Bullying Policy or the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Use of Headphones in School

The use of wireless and wired in-ear headphones is permitted only during Prep in the Senior School and whilst travelling to and from away fixtures when a student is representing the Senior school. Students may not wear over-head headphones. The SENCo or the Learning Support Department may apply a reasonable adjustment to this policy if a student requires use of headphones for a SEND reason.

In the Preparatory School, headphones are used by pupils during online testing and for some tasks in class, as directed by their teacher.

Safe and acceptable usage of mobile phones and electronic devices

Safe and acceptable usage of the internet and any other electronic and digital services to which students have access to, whether or not provided by the School, is that which leads to positive outcomes in a student's personal, social or academic development and which does not cause any offence or harm to others. For this reason, all students sign an Acceptable User Policy at the start of every academic year. This applies in full to boarding students. Staff also sign an Acceptable Use Policy when signing into their staff profile on a desktop computer.

Guidelines for the safe and acceptable usage of mobile phones and online technologies for staff are also contained within the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Key Online Safety Advice for Students and Parents
How to keep safe online and prevent cyber-bullying: advice to students

- Remember that anything you place on technology, such as photographs, private messages or voice notes, can be made public within seconds. You have very little control over this. Nothing is guaranteed to stay private. Whatever you send to others can travel worldwide and could stay online forever. University admissions officers and future employers may be able to view messages, films and photos posted years before.
- Be careful what you say online or in text messages. It is easy to upset someone by not reading carefully what you have written before pressing the SEND key. Be careful what images you send.
- Do not send/post inappropriate images or videos; Sexting is illegal.
- If you receive a nasty or rude message about someone, or a photo of them, do not forward it to anyone. Doing this means that you will be taking part in the bullying. You could even be breaking the law.
- Keep your password to yourself. Do not let anyone see you key it in. Do not let anyone know it or use it. Change your password regularly. Choose hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers. This makes it harder for others to hack into your account.
- Only give your mobile number or personal website address to loyal friends whom you trust completely. Remember also that some people change friends often, especially in the early teenage years.
- On social media, only follow those people who you know. If someone you do not know follows you or sends you a direct message, ask yourself why they are doing that. Do you have mutual connections? Can you easily identify them from their profile information?

- **Choose the highest security settings on internet sites; do not rely on default settings.** Use websites and services that let you **block** someone who is behaving badly or bullying you and use the blocking facility.
- Use websites and services, which allow you to report someone who is bullying.
- If you see cyber-bulling taking place, support the victim. **Repor**t the bully. Bullies get away with bad behaviour if no one tells.

The school regards incidents of cyber-bullying as it does bullying in any other form and the school's Anti-bullying Policy will be applied in the same way. Details of the College's response to cyber-bullying, and how students can seek support, are detailed in the Anti-bullying Policy.

Boarders

This policy applies equally to the School's boarding community. However, additional procedures are set out below with regard to National Minimum Standards for Boarding 8.3, 8.4 and 16 to ensure safe and acceptable use of the internet and other electronic and digital services in the boarding community.

- All boarders are made aware of the anti-bullying policy with specific reference to Cyber-Bullying and online safety and how to protect themselves from potential harm through whole school assemblies, boarding meetings and the curriculum.
- All boarders have access to clear information and guidance about how to be safe in the digital environment, which is displayed in common areas of the boarding houses and the School computer rooms.
- All boarders are clear about what they are and are not allowed to do and how they may report instances of cyber-bullying or inappropriate use of technologies, abuse and suspicious behaviour by other boarders, staff, volunteers or those outside School.
- Staff are vigilant and aware of their responsibilities towards upholding the Mobile Phone and Electronic Safety Policy by discreetly monitoring the use of the internet during those times when students are permitted to use school computers and at other times where boarders are using mobile and online technologies.
- The boarding staff take reasonable steps to control and monitor the use of the internet and other electronic means of communication without unnecessarily or disproportionally compromising the privacy of boarders or their ability to communicate with parents/guardians or outside agencies as established in National Minimum Standard 12 and set out in the Boarding Parents' Information Handbook. Some boarders are sometimes required to hand in all mobile forms of communication and computers to staff prior to going to bed each evening. They are then collected the following morning.
- Boarding staff reserve the right to have students' computers and other electrical items checked by the IT Department to ensure that they are being used appropriately.

Review
The Mobile and Electronic Devices Policy is monitored by the Deputy Head Pastoral and Deputy Head of the Preparatory School through liaison with the Senior Deputy Head, Assistant Head Academic, Assistant Head Boarding and Assistant Head, Head of Sixth Form. This is supported by the Director of Safeguarding and the Staff and Student E-Safety Committees, who evaluate the effectiveness of the policy. Heads of Year, the SENCo and the Heads of Department may also contribution to review of this policy. Further support for review of this policy is provided

through discussion with and survey of students, evaluating incidents which are reported, and through feedback from parents.

Links to Other Policies
Statement of Boarding Practice and Principles (Boarding Policy)

Bring Your Own Device Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

Pastoral Care Policy

Positive Behaviour and Relationships Policy

Acceptable-use Policies (AUP)

Nursery Mobile Phone and Camera Policy

Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Deputy Head and Deputy Head Pastoral and Deputy Head of Prep School.