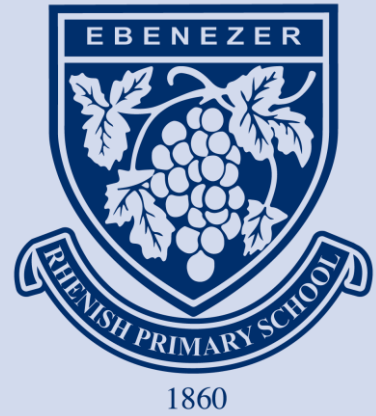




Rhenish Primary School Smart Device & Social Media Policy

Rooted in Tradition, Thriving for Tomorrow



1. Why This Policy Matters

Technology is a huge part of life today. Social media, gaming, and messaging apps can be great tools for creativity, and connection, but they also come with risks—cyberbullying, fake news, hacking, and poor online behaviour.

At Rhenish Primary School, we don't just want students to avoid mistakes—we want them to lead by example online. This policy is about helping you make smart, safe, and responsible choices, whether you're gaming, chatting, posting, or scrolling.

We follow our school values in the digital world, just like in real life:

- ✓ **Respect** – Treat others online the way you want to be treated.
- ✓ **Curiosity** – Explore and learn, but don't believe everything you see.
- ✓ **Perseverance** – Learn from mistakes and make better choices next time.
- ✓ **Belonging** – No one should feel left out, bullied, or embarrassed online.
- ✓ **Accountability** – Own your actions and be responsible for what you post.
- ✓ **Community** – Use technology to make the world better, not worse.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Rhenish Primary School Code of Conduct for Learners.

Where behaviour constitutes a Level 3, 4, or 5 offence under the Code of Conduct, disciplinary procedures in terms of that policy will apply, including disciplinary hearings, suspension, or other appropriate sanctions.

💡 **The Rule: Before you post, comment, or share—ask yourself: Is this respectful, responsible, and kind? If not, don't do it.**

2. Where This Policy Applies

This policy applies everywhere, including:

- ◆ At school – Using devices in lessons, on breaks, or during activities
- ◆ At school events - Camps, sports events, sports practices, tours, after-hours functions
- ◆ At home – If your online behaviour affects a classmate, teacher, or the school community, it still matters
- ◆ On social media and messaging apps – TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Discord, YouTube, and others
- ◆ In gaming – Roblox, Fortnite, Minecraft, Call of Duty, and any other online games with chat features
- 🏠 Even if parents allow something at home, the school can still take action if your online behaviour harms others in the Rhenish community.



3. Device Usage at Rhenish Primary School

Approved Devices by Grade Level:

- **Grades R-5:** No personal devices allowed at school
- **Grade 6:** School-issued Chromebooks only (for educational purposes)
- **Grade 7:** Personal devices permitted (laptops/tablets for learning)

4. Smartwatch Policy

 **Allowed:** Basic fitness watches that only track steps, heart rate, and time

 **NOT Allowed:** Smartwatches with internet connectivity, calling, messaging, social media, gaming, or camera features (including Apple Watch, Samsung Galaxy Watch, and similar devices)

Why This Rule Matters:

- **Privacy Protection:** Smartwatches with cameras can secretly record others, violating privacy and consent
- **Distraction:** Notifications, games, and messaging disrupt learning and focus
- **Cyberbullying Prevention:** Internet-connected watches provide another platform for inappropriate communication
- **Safety:** Unmonitored internet access on watches creates risks that parents and teachers cannot easily supervise

 **The Rule:** If your watch can do more than tell time and track fitness, it stays at home.

What Happens If You Break This Rule?

1	First time	Watch confiscated for the day, parent must collect it from the office. Written warning and reminder of policy.
2	Second time	Watch confiscated for one week, parent meeting required, formal written warning placed on file.
3	Third time	Watch confiscated for the term.

Note for Parents: Please help us enforce this rule by checking that your child's watch complies with our policy before they leave for school. If unsure whether a watch is permitted, contact the office for clarification.

5. The Big Rules – What You Can and Can’t Do

🚫 A. No Cyberbullying – Zero Tolerance

Cyberbullying isn’t just about mean words. It includes anything designed to hurt, embarrass, or exclude someone online. Cyberbullying may constitute a Level 4 offence under the Code of Conduct and may result in immediate disciplinary action depending on the severity of the incident.

✖ Not Allowed:

- Posting mean comments, rumours, or jokes at someone’s expense
- Editing photos/videos to make someone look bad
- Sharing private screenshots of someone’s messages without permission
- Creating “exposed” pages or group chats to talk badly about people

💡 **The Rule:** If you wouldn’t say it to their face, don’t type it online. If you see cyberbullying, report it.

🔗 What Happens If You Break This Rule?

1	First time	Formal written warning to child and parents, counselling session with school counsellor, restorative conversation with the victim (if appropriate), and written reflection on digital citizenship.
2	Second time	Internal disciplinary hearing with the disciplinary committee, loss of privileges (e.g. restricted device use at school for a period), and a parent meeting to set a behaviour contract.
3	Third time	Formal disciplinary hearing with possible suspension (duration depending on severity), mandatory external counselling proof required, and a device ban at school for a term.

🚫 B. No Sharing Inappropriate Content

🔒 Sharing or even watching inappropriate content is not okay.

✖ Not Allowed:

- Swearing or sending rude messages in group chats
 - Watching or sharing violent, sexual, or harmful videos
 - Live-streaming fights or posting videos to humiliate someone
 - Posting or forwarding gossip about classmates or teachers
 - Encouraging unsafe or risky challenges (social media dares, viral pranks)
 - Posting photos or videos of yourself in your school uniform
- 💡 **The Rule:** If you wouldn’t show it to a teacher or your parents, don’t share it.

What Happens If You Break This Rule?

1	First time	Parent contact, written warning, written reflection task, and removal of device for a week (if device was involved).
2	Second time	Internal disciplinary hearing, loss of device privileges for a term, and possible social media safety workshop assignment.
3	Third time	Formal disciplinary hearing with potential suspension and device ban for the remainder of the year. External counselling may be required.

Sharing explicit, violent, or harmful material may constitute a serious offence under the Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary proceedings.

C. No Sharing Photos or Videos Without Permission

- ◆ Ask before posting pictures or videos of classmates.
- ◆ Do not share or forward a video of someone else without their consent.
- ◆ Secretly recording teachers, students, or school activities is banned.

 **The Rule:** Ask first. If they say no, respect it.

What Happens If You Break This Rule?

1	First time	Formal warning, parent contact, and compulsory digital ethics reflection task.
2	Second time	Internal disciplinary hearing, removal of device privileges for a month, and apology to the affected party (where appropriate).
3	Third time	Formal disciplinary hearing with possible suspension and device ban for a term or longer. External counselling may be required.

D. No Fake Accounts, Catfishing, or Hacking

 Kids often think making fake accounts or guessing passwords is just for fun. But it's a serious issue.

Not Allowed:

- Pretending to be someone else online (catfishing)
- Creating a fake account to prank, spy, or troll someone
- Guessing passwords/logging into someone else's account without permission
- Using AI to generate fake screenshots or messages to start drama

 **The Rule:** Your online identity must be real. Don't invade someone else's privacy.

 What Happens If You Break This Rule?

1	First time	Formal warning, parent meeting, and signed digital responsibility contract.
2	Second time	Internal disciplinary hearing, device ban for a term, and external counselling session on online safety.
3	Third time	Formal disciplinary hearing with possible suspension and device ban for the year. Report to external authorities if hacking is severe.

Impersonation, hacking, or accessing another person's account without permission may be treated as fraud or dishonest conduct under the Code of Conduct.

E. Group Chat Etiquette

WhatsApp, Snapchat, Discord, and Instagram group chats are often where online issues occur. As a school, we strongly discourage children from joining large group chats, where bullying often occurs.

Not Allowed:

- Kicking someone out of a group just to hurt them
- Making secret chats to gossip about someone
- Spreading rumours or screenshotting private messages
- Allowing strangers or adults into a private group chat

 **The Rule:** If a group chat is used to bully, spread rumours, or exclude others, it will be shut down.

What Happens If You Break This Rule?

1	First time	Parent contact, formal warning, and group chat shutdown. Written reflection on inclusive communication.
2	Second time	Internal disciplinary hearing, restriction on social app/device use for a term, and parent-child online safety workshop required.
3	Third time	Formal disciplinary hearing with potential suspension and device ban for a term or longer. External intervention may be recommended.

F. No Online Challenges or Peer Pressure

Not all TikTok or social media challenges are safe. Some are designed to pressure children into doing dangerous or embarrassing things.

Not Allowed:

- Dangerous dares (choking challenges, eating unsafe things)
- “Exposed” pages where people share secrets or embarrassing photos
- “Delete-it” dares where kids post something and delete it before parents see

 **The Rule:** If a challenge is unsafe, humiliating, or illegal—don’t do it.

What Happens If You Break This Rule?

1	First time	Formal warning, parent contact, written reflection on peer pressure and online safety.
2	Second time	Internal disciplinary hearing, device ban for a term, and mandatory counselling on peer pressure.
3	Third time	Formal disciplinary hearing with possible suspension, extended device ban, and external counselling proof required.

6. Parent and Child Commitment – It Starts at Home

- ◆ Parents, social media and smart devices are not just a school issue—they start at home.
- ◆ We ask parents to:
 - ✔ Set clear rules about screen time and social media use. Use a screen time app.
 - ✔ Apply the correct safety and privacy settings within EACH app, not just the device.
 - ✔ Monitor their group chats and online activity. You are fully entitled to monitor their chats as primary school children.
 - ✔ Learn continuously using Google or social media about ongoing trends, privacy, safety, and responsible online behaviour. Follow social media educators like MySocialLife, SFC South Africa and The Digital Law Company-Emma Sadlier.
 - ✔ Check who your child is talking to online, and which friends they actually know in person.
 - ✔ Ensure your child's watch (if worn) complies with school policy—no internet, calling, or messaging

💡 **The Rule for Parents:** If your child is struggling online, work with us, not against us. We're here to help.

7. Final Words: It Starts With You

Your digital choices shape your future.

- 💡 Think before you post.
- 💡 If you see something wrong, report it.
- 💡 If a person or request from a person is unknown to you, ignore it.
- 💡 If the message or image or video is inappropriate, block it and report it.
- 💡 Use social media to be a leader, not a follower.
- 🗣️ It starts with you. Let's make technology a tool for learning, kindness, and growth—not drama or harm.

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8. Where to get help?

If you or someone you know is experiencing problems related to cyberbullying, online safety, mental health, or abuse, help is available. You are not alone.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

- **Police Emergency:** 10111
- **Police Crime Reporting:** 0860 010 111

CRISIS HOTLINES (24/7)

Childline (for children in crisis)

- **National Helpline:** 116 (toll-free, 24/7)
- **Childline Western Cape Office:** 021 762 8198
- **Email:** info@childlinewc.org
- **Address:** 38 Fleming Road, Wynberg, Cape Town, 7800
- **Website:** www.childlinewc.org

SADAG - South African Depression and Anxiety Group

- **Mental Health Helpline:** 0800 456 789 (24/7, toll-free)
- **Suicide Crisis Line:** 0800 567 567 (24/7, toll-free)
- **SMS Support:** 31393
- **General Counselling:** 011 262 6396
- **Website:** www.sadag.org

LifeLine Western Cape

- **Helpline:** 021 461 1113 (10:00 - 22:00 daily)
- **Website:** www.lifelinewc.org.za



PSYCHOLOGISTS & COUNSELORS IN STELLENBOSCH

Psychologists on Herold

- **Address:** 23 Herold Street, Stellenbosch Central
- **Services:** Child, adolescent, and family therapy; play therapy; assessments
- **Website:** www.heroldpsychs.com

Angelic Nespola & Associates (StellDoc Medical Centre)

- **Address:** 14 Coronata Street, Paradyskloof, Stellenbosch
- **Services:** Clinical and counseling psychology for adolescents and adults
- **Website:** www.angenespola.co.za



Natalie Sadie - Educational Psychologist

- **Address:** 4 Herold Street (Therapy in Action), Stellenbosch
- **Services:** Child/adolescent support, educational assessments, trauma support
- **Website:** www.nataliesadie.com

Stellenbosch University - Unit for Psychotherapeutic & Support Services

- **Phone:** 021 808 4994
- **Email:** supportus@sun.ac.za
- **Address:** 49 Victoria Street, Stellenbosch

ABUSE & SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORT

Rape Crisis Cape Town Trust

- **24-Hour Helpline:** 021 447 9762
- **WhatsApp Line:** 083 222 5164
- **Services:** Counselling for survivors of sexual violence (all genders)
- **Website:** www.rapecrisis.org.za

Rape Crisis Helderberg (The Crisis Centre)

- **Emergency Number:** 083 484 9409
- **Services:** Free counselling for survivors 18+ in Helderberg area
- **Website:** www.crisiscentre.org.za

SAPS Family Violence, Child Protection & Sexual Offences (FCS) Unit

- **National Head Office:** 012 393 2363
- **Child Abuse Reports:** childprotect@saps.gov.za
- **Cape Town FCS:** 021 467 6001/02/62
- **Claremont FCS:** 021 657 1966

Gender-Based Violence Command Centre

- **Helpline:** 0800 150 150 (24/7, toll-free)

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIP COUNSELING

FAMSA Western Cape (Family and Marriage Society of South Africa)

- **Phone:** 021 447 7951
- **Email:** famsa@famsawc.org.za
- **Services:** Family counselling, relationship support, parenting guidance

Website: www.famsawc.org.za

DIGITAL SAFETY & ONLINE EDUCATION

MySocialLife

- **Services:** Digital life skills education, online safety training for students/parents
- **Email:** info@mysociallife.com
- **Website:** www.mysociallife.com
- **Note:** South Africa's leading social media and online safety educator for schools

SFC (Smartphone Free Childhood) South Africa

- **Services:** SFC South Africa believes in protecting childhood and teen mental health by delaying smartphones and social media access, encouraging smartphone-free schools, and promoting the mindful, intentional and safeguarded use of technology in education.
- **Email:** info@sfc-sa.co.za
- **Website:** <https://www.sfc-sa.co.za/>
- **Note:** SFC-SA (Smartphone Free Childhood – South Africa) is part of a global movement focused on safeguarding childhood. The organization is not anti-tech, but rather advocates for age-appropriate, mindful tech use. Their mission is to protect child and teen mental health by delaying access to smartphones and social media, supporting smartphone-free schools, and promoting safe, intentional digital learning. Their core message is: “Slow-tech, low-tech until their brains are ready!”

The digital Law Company- Emma Sadlier

- **Services:** Legal advice pertaining to all digital device/Social media transgressions.
- **Email:** info@thedigitallawco.com
- **Website:** <https://www.thedigitallawco.com/>
- **Note:** South Africa's leading social media and online safety legal advisor for schools and parents.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE SUPPORT

Department of Social Development Substance Abuse Line

- **Helpline:** 0800 12 13 14 (toll-free)
- **SMS:** 32312

LEGAL SUPPORT

Family Advocate (Custody & Child Protection Issues)

- **Western Cape:** 021 426 1216

HOW TO REPORT ONLINE INCIDENTS

1. **Tell a trusted adult immediately** (parent, teacher, school counsellor)
2. **Screenshot evidence** (but don't share it further)
3. **Report to the school** through your teacher or principal
4. **Block and report** the person on the app/platform
5. **Call one of the helplines above** for support and guidance
6. **Report serious crimes** (threats, explicit content, abuse) to SAPS: 10111

This policy has been adopted:

At Rhenish Primary School in Stellenbosch on 12 December 2026
[Date]



Principal: _____



Governing Body Chairman: _____