

Mobile and Electronic Devices in School

Update to the use of mobile and electronic devices in School – Monday 1st July 2019.

As detailed in our recent communication, following feedback from various members of the school community, including parents, staff, students and external visitors to school, we have taken the decision to amend and update our Mobile Phone & Electronic Device Policy.

To best support student progress and positive mental health, we have taken the decision to operate as a 'phone free' school from Monday 1st July 2019. This means that students will not be allowed to have mobile phones, headphones, tablets, mp3 style players, electronic games or recording devices switched on or out whilst on the school grounds during the school day.

Research to support our decision.

There have been a number of pieces of research undertaken, which we have referenced as hyperlinks below, where studies highlight the use of mobile phones / electronic devices and their links to cyberbullying, mental health concerns, as well as academic performance. The most striking piece of research highlights that banning the use of mobiles and digital devices results in a significant improvement in GCSE outcomes for young people.

Academic outcomes:

Research shows that a school where mobile phones are not used firstly has improved academic outcomes. The BBC, along with other sources have previously reported on a study by The London School of Economics which found that;

'banning phones had the effect of giving pupils an extra week's education over the course of an academic year.

Researchers looked at schools in four English cities and found test scores increased by more than 6% in those which banned phones.'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-44546360>

See also <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/may/16/schools-mobile-phones-academic-results>.

The research actually shows that for some students, particularly those who may struggle and have additional vulnerabilities, the increase in results can be over 14%

There is also a link between schools which do not allow phones to be used at any time and a reduction in bullying behaviour, particularly cyber bullying and also to other risky online behaviour:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1012619/schools-ban-mobile-phones-save-pupils-online-bullying>

Spending break and lunch time playing, talking to a person face to face or engaging in extra-curricular activities also supports students' mental health:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/sep/26/ban-mobile-phones-in-schools-to-protect-pupils-mental-health>

If a mobile phone / electronic device or headphones are seen or heard during the school day from Monday 1st July, they will be confiscated immediately and, in the first instance, students will be able to collect these items at the end of the school day. If, however, there is a second issue, from that point onwards, parents will have to collect the item after school and sign for its return.

We appreciate you may have some queries around this, so we have compiled the following possible questions and responses. If you have any additional queries, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Masher, Deputy Headteacher.

Q1. I want my child to be safe on the way to and from school. They need a phone to ensure their safety.

A1. We appreciate that parents may want their child to carry a phone to and from school, and we are not banning this. Students, however, must have their devices switched off and away as they enter the school grounds at the start of the day and keep them away until the end of the school day.

Q2. My child may feel anxious or may need to contact me during the school day.

A2. If a student is feeling anxious or upset and needs to contact home, they are able to do this at break or lunch via the House Office. The Pastoral Team will be happy to facilitate a call or email to parents using the school phone / email.

Q3. I may need to contact my child during the school day?

A2. We understand that sometimes things may need to be communicated to students and plans for things such as being collected from school may change after a student leaves home in the morning. Again, as above, this can be facilitated through the House Office. The Pastoral Team will happily receive calls / emails which can then be relayed to your child.

Q4. What if my child needs their phone for learning?

A4. We have asked staff to create a learning environment where this is not necessary during the school day. Some subjects, such as Art, however, allow students to individually access specific sites for research purposes. This will be made explicitly clear in the lesson as to what they can use their device for and this is to only occur under specific staff direction.