

Dear Parents/Carers,

### Supporting the healthy and responsible use of mobile devices by pupils in Years 7 to 11

We have previously communicated to you that we would be actively reviewing the appropriate level of access to mobile devices for our pupils in Year 7 to 11 during the school day.

Following our review, we have decided that, in order to support the healthy use of mobile devices, and ensure the maximum possible focus on learning, from 31st October 2022 the use of mobile devices, such as a phone, will be banned. If your child has a phone in school, it must be switched off and placed in their school bag or locker at all times, otherwise it will be deemed as a breach of this new policy for mobile devices. The rationale for banning the use of such devices is borne out of our own experiences, research and guidance about the impact on young people and their learning. Some of the key reasons include, but are not limited to, the following;

- to promote and set an example for safe and responsible phone use;
- implement a measure to help pupils focus on their learning;
- to prevent unnecessary distraction during the school day;
- to improve wellbeing.

Pupils are very aware of the potential distractions caused to learning and the negative impact on face-to-face relationships that mobile devices can pose to young people. As a school, we have always embraced technology to support our ambitious future-forward curriculum. This change will not impact our approach, rather it will ensure that the balance is right for our pupils, and ensure they can take part fully in the school day without unnecessary distraction from a device. This will also bring the school in line with the majority of the local secondary schools who have the same expectation already in place.

As with any significant change, it is important there is a period of transition to enable pupils to adjust. From the week beginning 31<sup>st</sup> October pupils will be told of this change in policy. In the first instance, so as to avoid unnecessary conflict and give them this time to adjust, should there be a breach of the policy, pupils will be politely reminded to turn their phones off and put them away. Should they refuse to do this, they will be subject to a sanction in line with our Behaviour Policy. We do hope this can be avoided by maintaining respectful relationships.

We will then move to a position whereby if a pupil is in breach of the policy, the device will be confiscated, held by a senior member of staff, and returned at the end of the school day. We will inform you of the exact date before this comes into effect.

I know from conversations with either myself or other colleagues that many parents and carers share the same concern about the over-reliance and dominance of mobile devices for our young people. If you are interested in reading more about this, I would recommend the following;

- Ofcom Report - Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2022;
- Behaviour in Schools – DfE 2022;
- Mobile phones should be banned in schools – Sir Gavin Williamson (Ex-Secretary of State for Education) 2021.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this change in policy, by which we aim to support the healthy and responsible use of mobile devices by our young people.



John Edwards  
Deputy Headteacher