

EJB/sr

17th December 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

Firstly, thank you to the parents/carers who have sent in feedback on our mobile phone policy. I have read each comment carefully and have shared these with our governing body.

Overwhelmingly, parents/carers support a mobile phone ban. We have also conducted student voice and again, particularly Key Stage 3 support the need for a ban. One student commented that 'The use of mobile phones is anti-social as you see groups of students standing around on their phones when they should just be talking to each other'. Whilst there was some resistance from KS4 students, they understood why there would be a need to make this decision. 95 members of our Support and Teaching Staff took part in a survey about mobile phones. 85% of staff have said mobile phones haven't helped lessons, they have actually caused disruption to teaching and learning. This is a very concerning figure and one which we do need to act upon.

The Governing Body have unanimously backed a **complete ban of mobile phones starting on Monday, 7th January 2019**. This will be explained to all children so they are aware of the ban's immediate effect at the start of the New Year.

I have attached to this letter a FAQ section – feedback and questions from parents and our responses.

Many thanks again for your contributions in this debate. We are confident we are making the right decision to preserve an effective learning environment for our children and allow them the chance, once again to be children, without the detrimental impact that social media is currently having on many of our young people.

Yours faithfully,

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FAQ – Please see below constructive questions that were asked by parents.

How can I contact my child about any last minute changes that need to be made to their home travel arrangements?

Providing information is given to the school in a reasonable timeframe, we will ensure such messages are passed on. Reception also have a student helper each lesson who can deliver messages immediately to your child's classroom. We worked this way in all schools before mobiles and the return to this will not be an issue for us. We will also be making changes to our main switchboard to make it easier for parents to connect with main reception without having to go through the various options for year groups, as we recognise that year teams may be out on other duties or in meetings and may not get your messages immediately.

What if my child's lift does not arrive?

We will reiterate to your child that if ever their lift does not arrive, they should return to reception and we will ensure they get home safely.

What if my child suffers from anxiety and needs to contact home during the school day?

Our pastoral system has been greatly strengthened this year and we have trained nearly 50 support and teaching staff in Mental Health First Aid. We strongly believe that we can look after your children from 8.30am-2.55pm without needing parent intervention. However, we appreciate for some students it is sometimes beneficial for them to contact home, particularly where there are attachment issues. If your child suffers from anxiety or attachment issues, it is important that you contact the Progress Support Assistant (PSA) or Director of Student Progress (DOSP) so we can find a way forward to ensure you and your child feel they can manage the school day successfully.

Can my child have their phone on silent so I can track them on the journey to and from school?

That is absolutely fine and we do recommend that the child fully charges their phone each evening so that parents can contact their child before and after school.

Can my child keep their phone in a blazer pocket?

As long as it is not seen in school, we have no problem where a child chooses to keep their phone safe.

What if my child does not adhere to the new phone policy?

The phone will be immediately confiscated and placed in our school safe. There will be an expectation that parents/carers will come to collect this at a time convenient for them. We will be explaining to the children through tutor time and assemblies that anyone who does not adhere to our new phone policy will then be subject to these very clear behaviour procedures.

What if I don't agree with the phone ban?

As with the dreaded word 'Brexit', it's impossible to please everyone. However, we are confident we are making the right decision to preserve an effective learning environment for our children and allow them the chance, once again to be children, without the detrimental impact that social media is currently having on many of our young people.