

Friday 8 October 2021



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Dear Parents/Carers

Mobile phones in school

I want to thank you for your support since our return to school last month. Despite the easing of restrictions and all that has changed as a result, we have been delighted with the manner in which students have navigated their way through the past few weeks and are committed to ensuring learning is their main focus.

I have spent a great deal of time walking the school building each day to ensure that they are being well looked after, that teaching is of a high quality and the new curriculum schemes of learning are beginning to have impact. Again, I have been delighted with the attitude to learning of students and school remains a very calm and purposeful learning environment.

Added to that, I have also spent a great deal of time observing our students before school, after school and during their break and lunchtimes. It has been a real delight to see so many simply talking to each other and mixing with other students and year groups. It reminded me that we are getting back to how things used to be. I have seen less and less use of mobile phone technology and feel now is the time to remove their usage in school completely. There are many reasons for this but mainly related to their wellbeing and ability to once again communicate face-to-face with each other; they have missed that over the past eighteen months.

In recent weeks, I have been digesting the content of the results of The Big Ask – a national survey of England’s children. This work was launched by the Children’s Commissioner earlier this year, who wanted to capture their voices as quickly as she could, so we could truly know the state of the nation for them.; not as adults see them but written in their own words. I was thrilled to note that of the half a million children and young people involved, their priorities were family, education, wellbeing and community. Education is now, more than ever, so important to children and young people and they are acutely aware of the time spent throughout the pandemic on various social media platforms, which for many, has not been good for their mental health and wellbeing.

I am also aware of the impact that mobile phone use can have on young people in terms of their ability to communicate effectively and, given that one of our school curriculum drivers is focused on supporting our students to become confident communicators, I need to take action now at a time when our school community is ready for such a change. Learning and relationships must come first.

Finally, the previous Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, was determined to support students in their recovery from the pandemic and made his views clear on the use of mobile phone technology in schools. Too many of our children and young people have spent too much time using them and I need to create opportunities for all students, every day, to be free from them and their distractions and to have a break from the all-too-often pressures these devices can bring into their lives.

Headteacher:
Simon Wade
Chair of Academy Trustees:
John Winkley

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So, from Monday 1 November 2021, immediately after half term, I will be removing the use of all mobile phone devices in school including before and after school, during break and lunch times unless under the direct supervision of an adult. This means that phones must be switched off and out of sight at all times during the school day. Should a student be seen with one at any time, the phone will be confiscated and returned to them at the end of the day. Should this happen on a second occasion we will take the device, keep it safe and only return it to a parent or carer who will be asked to come into school to collect it. We will be writing this into policy so as to avoid any ambiguity for students and families.

I very much hope that my reasons for this change are clear and make sense to you all. I see this as a very positive move for our young people at a time when it is needed most. They are amazing and have dealt with the pandemic incredibly well in most cases. I want their entire focus to be on learning and having the ability to spend quality time with their peers, free from distraction. Should any of our students need to use a phone during the school day, for any reason, they can be supported by their Head of Year and Pastoral Manager.

Thank you in advance for your support. If you have any queries, please contact school and let me know.

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Wade', with a small circular stamp or mark to the right.

Simon Wade
Headteacher