

## **The Use of Mobile Devices In School.**

In response to feedback from parents and staff we have made the decision to operate a 'phone free' school. This means that students are not be allowed to have phones, wearable 'smart watches', headphones, non-learning tablets or mp3 style players out whilst on the school grounds.

Research. (see links below)

There are many reasons for this decision. Research shows that a school where mobile phones are not used firstly has improved academic outcomes. The BBC, along with other sources have recently reported on a student 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>

We do understand that some students struggle with social time and we have spaces including the library and Pitman building where these students can go and feel supported at break and lunch time.

Students are asked to have their devices off or on silent whilst on the school property, including break and lunch times. If a device (including headphones) is seen or heard then staff will be asked to confiscate this until the end of the day. The device will be stored in a safe in G109 for KS3 students and G21 for KS4 students. The first time a device is confiscated during a term, it will be able to be collected at the end of the school day. Any subsequent times the phone must be collected by a parent or other nominated adult with a letter of authorisation from the parent or it will be held for 5 school days, whichever is sooner.

If you have any questions you would like to ask Mr Skipp, Head Teacher and Helen Kerr. Assistant Head teacher are available for parents to see in a 'drop in session' on the 11<sup>th</sup> December between 5.30pm and 7pm in the CLC.

We have listened to the concerns that parents have expressed and have made the following adjustments:

**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 are not 'banning' students from having phones off and in their bag. They can use these on the way to and from school.*

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

*A2. If a student wants to use their phone during break or lunch time we have created 3 'phone hubs' where students can go to check and send messages or make calls in these situations. They are G109 for our KS3 students, G21 for KS4 students and The Pitman Building for all students who work with our individual learning department.*

**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. Students can check messages if they are expecting one at break and lunch time in one of the phone hub locations. We are also able to pass on messages to students that are called in to reception. We have a student messenger each day and will ensure that messages are passed on quickly.*

**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. Students are able to carry their planner with their timetable in and we can provide a new planner if the original is lost and timetables can be given to students for the day if they forget their planner.*