

Our Ref: JPR/KWI

21st July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Mobile 'Phone Policy – September 2021

I write to inform you of a change in our mobile phone policy from September 2021.

From the return to school after the summer holidays, students will no longer be allowed to have or use their mobile phones anywhere in school.

We already operate phone free zones in lessons and within school buildings but this will now expand to anywhere in the school site, at any time within the school day.

We are aware that a blanket mobile phone ban will be seen as contentious to some students and parents/carers; it is something we have considered introducing for a number of years but have always felt previously that the arguments for and against were balanced and so decided to maintain the status quo. At this time, we feel that the benefits of the change outweighs any downsides.

We are making this change for a number of reasons:

The feedback to our Pastoral Team from students is that social media is becoming harder and harder for them to manage. They are exposed to a barrage of messaging, notifications etc across a 24 hour period. We feel school should be a safe space for students where they can leave this relentless influx behind for a few hours and in doing so help them to concentrate on their learning, their physical activity, and in-person conversations with one another.

Following the concerns related to sexual harassment raised in the 'everyone's invited' website, where many schools were noted to have had students using mobile phones to harass, humiliate and intimidate one another, it is important to us that at Bishop's we have done everything we possibly can to reduce the risk of such distress being caused to any of our students.

This term we have had a big focus on manners and it has been a joy to see students gain confidence in greeting both staff and each other, and looking adults in the eye. We want students to continue to develop these skills during social time, opening students up to the visual clues and prompts from each other's faces and body language, rather than relying on a phone screen to occupy them. The ability to have face-to-face conversations and pick up on (and give) these visual clues are important skills both for future employment and life in general.

Mobile phones can be expensive items, used as a status symbol, and in some cases cost more than a parent will spend on school uniform, stationery, and books in a student's 5 years of secondary school. Many things we do in school are to help create an equitable environment, from students wearing a uniform and a set equipment list, to cashless catering. We feel changing our mobile phone policy in this way will help further remove anxiety and fear of missing out in students about what they do or do not have, or their parents/carers can afford.

If you feel that it is necessary for your son/daughter to have access to a mobile phone on the way to and from school, then we will have a secure safe for their phones to be stored during the school day.

If you as parents/carers wish to get an essential message to your son/daughter during the school day then reception will be pleased to relay it on your behalf.



Students who are seen to have phones on them, or who use them in school, will have them confiscated for the remainder of the school day. They will be kept safe and secure during this time. Students who have their phones confiscated three times will only be able to have their phones collected by a parent/carer.

We would urge students not to simply turn off their phone or place it on 'silent' and keep it in their pocket or bag. This will add to the temptation of using it school time which will result in confiscation, and neither will it provide the break from the devices that we feel school should be. Students who use their phones to make contact with someone outside of school, during the school day, will be sanctioned, as the phone should not be used in school. Students who need to call home should approach student services, who will either call on their behalf or facilitate this for the student.

When referring to phones, we also include any similar device such as a tablet and accessories such as AirPods and earphones.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J Price
Headteacher