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## Rationale

The objective of this policy is to limit the amount of time students at Welling School spend on their phones. There is evidence both scientific and anecdotal, that there is a direct link between increased screen time and a range of negative outcomes including reduced academic performance, increased mental ill-health issues and reduced physical fitness. Whilst there is an educational place for electronic devices in the classroom, it is clear that the leisure time students have in school should be away from screens, socialising with their peers.

For the purposes of this policy, 'phones' stand for mobile phones but also any portable electronic device that can be used for gaming, messaging, recording or running social media apps, including smart watches.

## Policy for Students in Years 7 – 11

- Students may bring their phones to school but they must be switched off and out of sight at all times when they are on the school site. This means that students must switch off their phones before they enter the school gates. Students must also put earphones and headphones away at the same time.
- Students must keep their phone turned off and out of sight in their bag. If a student has a phone out or visible for any reason other than being asked to do so by a member of staff, or if the phone rings, the student should expect the phone to be confiscated and to have to collect it from Reception at the end of the school day.
- If a student refuses to hand their phone to a member of staff upon request, they will receive a C2 sanction. If their continued refusal to follow instructions results in the matter being escalated to a senior member of staff, their sanction may also be escalated to a C3.
- If a member of staff requests the use of phones to support a learning activity during a lesson, students must use their phones only for the task set. Any other use of the phone will result in a sanction in addition to confiscation of the phone. At the end of the task, it is the students' responsibility to switch off their phones and put them away again.
- If a student has their phone confiscated on more than one occasion, then on the third occasion the parent/carer of that student will be asked to collect the phone from Reception. Any further breaches will result in a phone ban for the remainder of the half term. Any student who has their phone confiscated whilst being banned from having a phone in school will have their phone held in the school safe until the end of the half term.
- Phones should still be handed in with any other valuables before PE Lessons.

## Policy for Students in Sixth Form

- Students may bring their phones to school but they must be switched off and out of sight at all times when they are on the school site apart from when they are in the Sixth Form Centre.
- All other expectations regarding mobile phone use remain. Confiscated phones should be collected from the Sixth Form Office.
- It is important that Sixth Form students set an example to the younger years by not using their phones anywhere else in the school.

## Policy for staff

- As in all aspects of school life, staff are powerful role models for students. In parallel to Sixth form students staff should only use their phones in designated staff areas, outside lesson time. It is difficult to enforce a 'no see' policy with students if staff use phones in front of them. This means that staff also need put their phone and headphones away when they walk through the school gates.

- Consistency is the key, as with any other policy, it is effective only when every member of staff is consistent in enforcing it. Staff should confiscate any phone from any student in Years 7 -11 if they see one. The same applies to any Sixth Form student unless they are in the Sixth Form Centre.
- If a phone is confiscated, it should be placed in an envelope with the student's name, tutor group and date on it. The teacher that confiscates the phone must log the phone confiscation on Class Charts. The phone should be taken at the earliest convenient opportunity to Reception where it will be recorded in the phone log. The student should be informed to collect it after school on the same day (unless this is the third confiscation which means other arrangements will apply).
- Tutors will periodically check during registration that phones have been turned off.
- Where possible, staff should avoid setting cover work that involves the use of phones.

### **Policy for Parents**

The school does not take responsibility for any student valuables brought into school. Students bring expensive phones, headphones, watches and other valuables at their own risk and against the recommendation of the school.

There is no expectation for a student to carry a phone. However, since many do carry smartphones, it is useful to harness them in lessons for short tasks.

- It is expected that parent/carers will support the school in reinforcing the expectation that their child's phone will be confiscated if seen. Where a student's phone is confiscated for a third time, a parent/carer will be required to collect the phone from the school Reception. If there are further breaches of the phone policy within a half term a student will lose the privilege of bringing a phone to school and parent/carers will be informed of this.
- If a parent/carer needs to contact their child during school hours, they should do so through Reception, by phoning 020 8304 8531. If your child has forgotten their PE kit, homework, lunch, etc., these can be dropped off at Reception where staff will ensure the items reach your child. The reverse also applies: a student may request that their Care & Guidance Assistant contacts their parent/carer in an emergency.
- Parent/carers must not contact their child directly on their mobile phone. If your child calls you from their mobile phone you should tell them that they should not be calling you and that they need to speak to their Care & Guidance Assistant. If staff see students on their phone, even if they are speaking with home their phone will be confiscated.
- The school remains mindful of its responsibilities to keep your child safe and will continue to make contact with home during the school when required.

To support parent/carers in enforcing their own rules for phone use at home, the school makes it clear that if homework set by the school requires the internet, it can be completed on a computer with internet access – there is no requirement for a phone to be used. If a home computer is not available and your child uses their phone for such homework, then it should be monitored just as computer use is.

By restricting screen time during school hours, students should be able to focus more on their studies. The school also actively supports parent/carers who wish to restrict screen time at home. The growing body of evidence about too much screen time means in working together to reduce it, we can improve the academic performance, mental health and physical fitness of your child. This policy supports us in our safeguarding responsibilities to your child.

Review: July 2021