

19 July 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you to all members of the school community, including parents, who responded to the school's consultation on the use of mobile phones by pupils.

Having carefully reviewed the responses, the overwhelming outcome is that mobile phone use must not be allowed to affect adversely the learning environment. Consequently, the school's governors have decided that **the use of mobile phones by pupils anywhere on the school site is to be banned with effect from 01st September 2018**. Governors have decided to support a rigorous policy which requires staff who see a mobile phone (or similar communication device) being used by a pupil to remove the device and not return it to the pupil (*see below).

Although there are arguably benefits to mobile technology, we have found that as mobile phones have developed more features, they are increasingly distracting pupils from their core learning. 'Alerts' from social media platforms, emails, texts and even calls during the school day from family members are proving too difficult for pupils to 'resist' checking and responding to. Not to mention the facility to listen to music, play games, take photographs/film and the risks of 'cyberbullying'. Evidence is starting to emerge which suggests that the extensive use of mobile technology may be detrimental to children's mental health.

The reason for the ban will be explained to pupils by staff before the end of this term and reminders given at the start of next term. *Any pupil found to be using a mobile phone (or when a mobile phone 'sounds' in any way) will have the phone confiscated by the member of staff; **unlike current practice, the mobile phone will not be returned to the pupil subsequently**. Parents will be required to make an appointment to meet with a designated member of staff with their child in order to have the mobile phone returned. (Refusal to hand over a mobile phone when directed to do so by a member of staff will result in an automatic level 2 exclusion.)

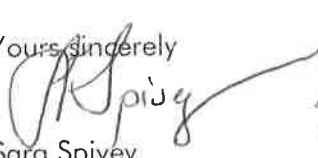
We would ask that parents support fully the school in this matter and take the time to go through the revised expectations explained in this letter with their child/ren. Some children, of course, might need guidance from their parents regarding how to manage essential communication outside of school hours, for example on the way to or from school.

We are obliged to remind pupils and parents that the school does not accept liability for items that are damaged, lost or stolen in school; a further reason why expensive items such as mobile phones, iPads and similar should not be brought into and used at school.

Coincidentally, since we initiated the school's consultation on this matter, it has featured quite considerably in the media with President Macron introducing legislation in French schools to ban pupils' phone use and Ofsted's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, 'backing' schools that ban mobile phones to reduce low level disruption. Clearly, this is an issue that goes far beyond Springfield!

Thank you in anticipation of your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely



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Mobile Phone Consultation – ‘FAQs’

Q: Teachers sometimes allow pupils to use their mobile phones for research or to play educational games such as ‘Kahoot’. What will happen if mobiles are banned? A: *The school is fortunate to be well resourced already with respect to technology. The school has purchased further (portable) Chromebooks, laptop computers and digital SLR cameras for next term to ensure that pupils have access to technology when appropriate for learning and research activities.*

Q: Are pupils allowed (personal) iPads/tablets or smart watches in school? A: *No. (However, electronic devices required to monitor specific health conditions may be authorised by the School Nurse.)*

Q: If my child’s phone is confiscated, when will I be able to retrieve it? A: *We hope that, with the robust support of parents, we can avoid the need to confiscate too many phones! However, should your child’s phone be confiscated you will need to telephone the school’s reception to make an appointment with a designated member of staff. Usually this will be a Head of Achievement, Pastoral Manager or a member of the senior leadership team; confiscated phones will be passed to them for safekeeping. The appointment will need to fit around staff commitments as well as your own and so it may be a few days before the phone is returned.*

Q: I support the ban in school, but worry about my child travelling to and from school as we live out of catchment. A: *The ban applies to the use of mobile phones by pupils on the school site only.*

Q: How do I contact my child during the school day if he does not have his mobile phone switched on? A: *Other than in emergency situations/exceptional circumstances, parents should not need to contact their children during the school day. Urgent messages can be passed on via Reception or the Year Offices, but we would politely ask parents to consider just how urgent their message is before telephoning school!*

Q: What happens if a confiscated phone is damaged, stolen or similar? A: *The school does not accept liability for any property that is lost, damaged or stolen on the school site. Please do not send your child to school with expensive/valuable items.*

Q: Will pupils be allowed to take mobile phones on school trips e.g. to Germany? A: *Yes. However, pupils will be advised that these should be for emergency contact only.*

Q: If my child has her phone on her, but does not actually use it, will it still be confiscated? A: *Any mobile phone that is seen or heard directly by a member of staff will be confiscated. For example, if a mobile phone is seen in a pupil’s shirt pocket it will be confiscated, even if it is not technically being used. Teachers will not, however, be randomly searching for phones in pupils’ bags, lockers etc. If mobile phones are ‘neither seen nor heard’ on the school site, there should not be a problem.*

Q: Can my child store a turned off phone in his locker during the school day so that he can have it on the way to and from school? A: *Yes. However, pupils must manage this independently before and after the school day. Time will not be allowed for this – pupils should be at their Tutor rooms by 8.40am for a prompt 8.45am start to the school day.*

Q: Are teachers allowed to use mobile phones themselves in lessons? A: *The school uses a ‘two step verification’ security system for teachers’ computers which occasionally requires teachers to enter a code sent to them via text message. Teachers also need mobile phones when leading school trips. Other than in those circumstances, there are no other reasons for teachers to be using mobile phones in lessons, on duty etc.*

Q: What is a level 2 exclusion? A: *This is the equivalent to a full day (i.e. 5 lessons and break times) in the school’s isolation room.*