

Claverham Community College.

MOBILE PHONES POLICY October 2014

Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones by students is now common. There are benefits and disadvantages to allowing or disallowing pupils to bring mobile phones into school.

These benefits and disadvantages have to be viewed through individual and community perspectives.

In looking at this review we have taken account of parent and pupil views accumulated over the last few years. We have also looked at our own data and knowledge as well as looking at national research.

Potential problems can include,

- Mobile phones can be valuable items and might render a student vulnerable to theft on journeys to and from school.
- Mobile phones can make students objects of envy or disparagement and could have implications with regard to discipline and potential bullying.
- The use of mobile phones in the classroom is disruptive to the class and learning. Schools that allow phones on site suffer from significantly increased rates of disruption.
- The use of mobiles phones for texting could potentially be used for cyber- bullying and lead to issues of classroom discipline.
- Use of smart phones with integrated cameras and web access could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images.
- The capture and subsequent distribution of images can be used for the humiliation or cyber-bullying of other pupils.
- Allowing mobile phones into school puts a lot of temptation in front of pupils and instances of theft could arise.
- There would be insurance implications to the school if phones were allowed in the school.

Potential benefits can include,

We are aware that we are in a rural area with some pupils travelling considerable distances; parents would feel safer if their child carried a mobile phone. This is perhaps the most compelling argument for phones in school.

Phones with GPS could aid tracking a lost child.

Some schools use the software features on phones to enhance their lessons.

Options considered.

To allow mobile phones in school. Phones to be switched off in lessons, but allowed to be used at break and lunchtime, possibly in supervised areas.

To allow mobile phones in school, but all phones to be switched off at all times on site.

To allow parents to request that their child carries a mobile phone due to travelling, but deposits the phone at a collection point in school.

Not allowing pupils to bring mobile phones to school.

School decision.

Our two main considerations when reviewing this policy were safety and change in a policy which would disrupt the smooth running of the college.

We have no evidence that carrying a mobile phone would have significantly changed the outcome of a safety issue when travelling locally to and from school throughout the time mobile phones have been common personal items.

Pupils who walk to school have short journeys with an associated low risk.

Pupils who use school or public transport have access to a responsible adult in terms of the driver of the bus or coach.

Where pupils make journeys outside of normal college hours parents should make alternative travel arrangements.

A telephone is available for pupils to use outside of school hours as detailed below.

Fortunately we live in an area with a low risk of incidents involving children.

We do however have significant evidence from our own experience and that of other schools throughout Britain that support the view that allowing mobile phones in school increases mobile phone related problems as outlined above.

Based on the above the school policy does not allow mobile phones to be brought into the college.

Consequences.

- Where a student is found by a member of staff with a mobile phone in school, close to the school premises in college uniform or travelling on a school bus, it will be confiscated from the student and in the first instance returned to the student at the end of the day. (Unless the phone has been confiscated during that afternoon.) If a phone is confiscated for a second time in a term (old term definition), the parent or carer will have to collect the phone from school. If a phone is confiscated for a third time the phone will be given back at the end of the term .

- Using mobile phones to bully or threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.
- Incidents of pupils taking pictures or filming other students, staff or members of the public will be treated very seriously.
- The school is not responsible for any loss or damage to any such item brought into school and therefore no effort will be made to recover the item.

Emergency contact

In cases of emergency or necessity, contact via the school office remains the appropriate point of contact for parents. This will ensure the student is reached quickly and assisted in the appropriate way. If a pupil needs to contact a parent they can go to Reception and they will arrange for a phone to be available in one of the offices or from Reception. This applies before and after school up to 4.45. After that time phone calls can be made from the Sports Centre.

If pupils miss buses or buses are delayed they can phone from Reception.