



Biddenham

International School & Sports College

Principal: Mr David Bailey

Head of School: Ms Eleanor Grylls

5th September 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

There has been much in the media recently about the use of social media sites, cyber bullying and the effects of mobile phones on young people's sleeping habits, social engagement, mental health and learning in school. To address this we will be initiating a new 'Mobile Phone' policy.

At Biddenham, we were one of the first schools in Bedford Borough to embrace mobile phones and their potential educational use in the classroom. Now that every student has a Chromebook, there is access to the world wide web through these devices and mobile phones do not have as much of a place within the educational setting as they once did.

We will be making all students aware of the Mobile Phone policy, through assemblies over the coming weeks. We are informing parents through this letter and are happy to answer any questions on this as well. The following will now be applied in school;

- Mobile phones are allowed in school for the acknowledged safety and contact reasons (before and after the school day only - **contact during the school day for any urgent communication should be through the school office on 01234 342521**)
- Mobile phones and headphones **MUST** be kept in a bag during the school day and not visible (this includes charging phones during lessons, phones out on the desks, or phones visible in pockets where they can distract students during lessons).
- Mobile phones must be switched off or on silent before the lesson starts and before entering the classroom (not on vibrate which can distract students during lessons)
- Students will not be allowed to listen to music during lesson time
- Mobile phones can be used (if required) during lunchtimes and break times. However, we strongly recommend that students engage in the school life around them and not their devices. We have plenty of extra- curricular activities on offer.

If mobile phones are seen during lessons or are taken out during lessons, the student will be given a verbal warning and they will need to put the phone away in their bag immediately. If the phone is seen for a second time during a lesson they will be confiscated and held in the school safe until the end of the school day for the student to collect. If this occurs more than once, then the second time we will expect parents/carers to collect the mobile phone with the student.

As part of our review of mobile phone use in school we have been working with Yondr, a company which specialises in supporting schools with 'mobile free solutions'. Here is a link to their website, <https://www.veryondr.com/howitworks> for more information. We are considering introducing this system at Biddenham to help students minimise mobile phone use during the school day.

It is the school's preference, that mobile phones are NOT to be brought into school at all, but in this day and age we accept that teenagers and parents like the security of being able to stay in touch. However, the amount of time in and out of school that students are spending on their

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phones and in particular on social media is beginning to impact and at times detract from our focus on learning. Especially when this spills into friendship issues, cyberbullying and inappropriate behaviour in and outside of school. Young people should not be receiving or responding to text messages when they are in their lessons. It is really important that we all stay focused on our shared, core purpose of educating students.

We are asking parents/carers to speak to their children about acceptable use of mobile phones and to consider the amount of time children are on their mobile devices during the day and in the evening. Here are some links to useful articles that may help in supporting these conversations.

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers/phones>

<https://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/guidance-advice/mobile-phones/>

We thank you for your support and hope this leads to some positive conversations with our young people both at home and in school.

Yours faithfully,



Mr D Bailey
Principal



Ms E Grylls
Head of School