

## Mobile Phones

From Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September Highlands School's new mobile phone policy was implemented. The school has taken the decision to ask students to have phones turned off in school for the following reasons:

**Safeguarding:** the Department of Education states that, 'it is essential that students are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material'. The school uses filters to make sure students cannot access harmful material on school computers, however, students using mobile phones may be exposed to potentially harmful material without the school being able to protect them or intervene.

**Student wellbeing:** there is increasing evidence to suggest that social media sites can have an adverse impact on students' wellbeing and mental health. In 2017 The Royal Society of Public Health found that social media sites inspired feelings of inadequacy and anxiety amongst 11-25 year-olds.

**Behaviour at school:** we want students to develop socially, as well as academically. By asking students to have their mobile phones turned off and in their bags, we will encourage them to talk to each other and to take advantage of the activities the school offers during social time. The change will also help keep students safe from cyberbullying during the school day.

### Highlands School Mobile Phones Policy

#### Students in Years 7-11

Mobiles phones are not to be seen or used from the time students arrive at school in the morning until the time they leave the school site at the end of the day. This includes break and lunchtime.

If a student's mobile phone is used, seen or heard during these times it will be confiscated.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the School Office. The first time in an academic year a student's phone is confiscated it can be collected from the office by the student after 3:45pm, the same day.

If a student has a phone confiscated more than once in an academic year the phone will only be returned, after 3:45pm, to a parent or carer. Phones will not be returned to brothers, sisters or friends. Only SLT can authorise the return of a mobile phone. Students should not be rude or disrespectful to the School Office staff in an attempt to get their phone back. If students are rude to staff in an attempt to have their phones returned, they will be sanctioned in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.

If a student has a mobile phone confiscated on more than two occasions in an academic year, the school may impose more serious sanctions or hold the phone for a longer period of time which will be determined by a member of the SLT.

If a student refuses to give their phone to a member of staff when asked it will be treated as an act of defiance and the student will be sanctioned in line with school policies.

Mobile phones must not be used to contact parents/carers from the time students arrive at school in the morning until they leave the school site at the end of the day. In an emergency, the School will allow students to use the School Office phone to contact parents/carers.

Parents/carers should not contact students on their mobile phones during school hours (8.40-3.25). Urgent messages can be relayed to students via the school office.

The school accepts no liability for loss of or damage to the phone whilst on school premises or at any activity organised by the school. The phone is, at all times, the responsibility of the student.

Whilst students are in school uniform (for example, on the way to and from school) mobile phones must not be used for taking photographs/video without the permission of the subject or be involved in cyber bullying or inappropriate communications. The school considers students to be in school uniform even if ties / blazers etc. are removed or if the uniform is covered with a coat, jumper or other clothing.

The school reserves the right to take action against students involved in any instances of cyber bullying if the bullying causes disruption to the running of the school or distress to students.

**Headphones:** Headphones are subject to the same rules as mobile phones unless a member of staff allows their use in lessons, for educational purposes, whilst plugged into a PC or laptop.

**Smart watches or other electronic devices:** If smart watches are used for communication purposes, they will be confiscated in line with the policy.

**School trips and visits:** A trip leader may authorise the use of mobile phones and headphones on long coach journeys. However, they should only be used to listen to music, they may not be used for communication purposes or to photograph or video other students. Staff may authorise the use of mobile phones to take photos of points of interest whilst on a trip. Staff may ask students to contact one another to relay important information in an emergency.

**Students in years 12-13:** Students in the Highlands Sixth Form should have their mobile phones turned off and out of sight when on the school site.

However, they may be used in the Sixth Form common room during break and lunch times. Sixth Form students who use their phone elsewhere in the school will have it confiscated. It can be collected from the office at the end of the day. Repeated instances of non-compliance with this policy will be dealt with on an individual basis.