



The Crossley Heath School

Head Teacher: Mr Dean Jones MA

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21st March 2024

Dear Parents/Carer,

Re: New (non statutory) Government Guidance on Banning Phones in Schools

I am writing in relation to the recent guidance issued by the government regarding the banning of phones in schools and to discuss its implications for our school community.

As you will be aware, at The Crossley Heath School, our current policy is that we recognise that students may need to carry mobile phones to and from school for use in emergencies or for personal use.

Students are allowed to bring them on site but they must be switched off or on silent from 8:25am and **kept out of sight**. Students are only allowed to use their phones during lunch time in their indoor social area or outside of the school building. Students are not allowed to use their phones during morning break. **The exception is for Y11 who may use their phones during morning break in their indoor social space only.** Students are never allowed to use their phones in the toilets, corridors, staircases, reflection room, changing rooms or classrooms (without the explicit permission of a member of staff.)

We encourage all our students to spend their social times away from screens. We encourage them to talk, play, join extra-curricular clubs and socialise with their friends and peers. Mobile phones/iPods/music playing devices and all other technology must be kept switched off or on silent inside school during the school day unless a member of staff has given explicit permission, for example a teacher may allow students to use a mobile device for a teaching and learning purpose. This also applies to tutorial time. In these circumstances, students use will be monitored.

Smart watches must not be activated to receive calls/messages during the school day.

Should students need to contact their parents/carers at break they should go to the pastoral base where they will be able to use their own or the school phone for such purposes. We discourage parent/carers from messaging their child during the school day unless absolutely necessary.

While this policy has generally served us well, we recognise the need to review our approach considering the new guidance. Moreover, the government's decision to introduce stricter measures regarding phone usage in schools is part of a broader effort to address the impact of smartphones, particularly on younger students. We have been closely following campaigns aimed at supporting parents in resisting the pressure to provide smartphones for Year 7 students, and we believe that changes to our approach could align with these efforts.

However, we also acknowledge that simply banning phones during school hours will not fully address the broader issue of social media's influence on young people. It's important to recognise that students have access to their phones before and after school, as well as during weekends and holidays, which collectively make up the majority of their waking hours. Therefore, any meaningful

intervention must extend beyond the school environment. If your family is currently grappling with issues related to phone usage and your child, there are resources available to help. For example,

- CEOP Education: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents>
- Parent Zone: <http://parentzone.org.uk/>
- NSPCC: <https://nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents>
- UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

In the light of the new guidance and the complexities surrounding phone usage among young people, we will be conducting a review of our phone policy. We will update you fully when any decisions have been taken and give a clear timeline for implementation should things need to change.

We would also welcome any thoughts you have. Please do use this link to an online form to share any information/comments for our consideration:

<https://shorturl.at/gqzRT>

I appreciate there will be a range of views including some strong feelings. It may also be useful to note that all the guidance supports children having a phone with them (but switched off/out of sight during the school day) that they can use on the journey to and from school if needed (and we know this is something that families are very keen on).

Thank you for your understanding and support as we navigate this issue together.

Yours Sincerely



Mr L. Chesters
Director of Pastoral Care