



23 February 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians,

You will have seen that the Government has recently written to all schools with advice and guidance on how best to manage mobile phone usage in schools. We are fortunate that our policy is already very clear, and our students widely support our approach.

We are writing to remind you of the school's position and to provide an update on a subtle change to Wilmington Grammar School for Girls mobile phone policy, which comes into effect on Monday 26th February. Alongside this update, we would like to reiterate the significant benefits associated with fostering a mobile-free environment within our school.

The updated policy, summarized below, reflects our commitment to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all:

1. **Mobile Phone-Free Environment:** Students may bring mobile phones to school, but they must not be seen or heard, unless express permission is granted by a staff member.
2. **Exemptions for Medical Reasons:** Students with valid medical exemptions will be permitted to use their phones to measure blood sugar levels.
3. **No Usage During Breaks, Lunch, or Transitions:** The policy extends to break and lunch times, during transitions, and before the bell marks the start and end of the school day.
4. **Consequences for Violations:** If a student breaches this policy, their phone will be confiscated and only returned to their parent or guardian via school reception.
5. **Usage after school:** After the school day concludes, students are allowed to use their phones only when outside the front of the school building.
6. **Photography and Filming:** Under no circumstances should phones be used to photograph or film any student or member of staff.
7. **Confiscation Procedure:** When a staff member confiscates a phone, it will be taken to the school reception and placed in an envelope, clearly labelled with the student's name and form. The phone can only be collected by a parent or guardian. It will not be returned directly to the student or to a sibling who is a student at the school.
8. **Collection Times:** Parents or guardians can collect confiscated phones from the school reception between 3:00 pm and 4:15pm.

Benefits of a Mobile-Free Environment:

Maintaining our mobile-free environment within our school carries numerous benefits for your child's school experience:

1. **Enhanced Focus and Engagement:** By minimising distractions, students can fully immerse themselves in the learning process, leading to improved concentration and academic performance.
2. **Promoting Face-to-Face Interaction:** Eliminating the use of mobile phones during breaks encourages students to engage in meaningful face-to-face interactions, fostering social skills and interpersonal relationships.
3. **Reduced Cyberbullying and Social Pressures:** A mobile-free environment mitigates the risk of cyberbullying and social pressures associated with online interactions, providing a safer and more positive school atmosphere.
4. **Improved Well-being:** Limiting screen time during school hours contributes to the overall well-being of students, promoting a healthy balance between technology use and other essential activities.
5. **Respect for Privacy and Dignity:** Prohibiting the use of phones for photography and filming ensures the privacy and dignity of every student and staff member, creating a safe and inclusive environment.

We sincerely appreciate your understanding and cooperation in supporting these measures. We know that some students use their phone to contact home at the end of their journey to/from school and we do not want to discourage that. Therefore, it is important that the students are reminded of the importance of keeping their phone in their blazer pocket or bag for the duration of the school day. There is no need for them to use a phone during the school day. Please contact your child's Head of Year or student manager with any concerns.

The school cannot take responsibility for a personal device if it is lost or stolen. We will of course do what we can to help resolve any relevant issue.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs S Munden
Assistant Headteacher – Personal development, Behaviour & Welfare, DSL