

Appendix 8

Mobile phone guidance

In light of changed guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and following consultation with parents and staff, Mary Webb School have changed their current guidance on mobile phones to **'never seen, never heard'**. This means mobile phones must be kept in bags, turned off and not to be seen during the school day from arrival on school site to when students leave. Any communication with parents during the school day must be done via student reception including student illness. Clearly from a safeguarding perspective parents see the value in students having a mobile phone on the journey to and from school, which we totally understand and agree with.

As you know at Mary Webb School and Science College, we approach the decision parents/carers take to allow their child/ren to use/own a mobile phone as a privilege that comes with certain responsibilities for each child and their parents/carers. We ask that parents reinforce this message at home, as we do in school, to avoid issues. It is our expectation parents/carers encourage and reinforce responsible mobile phone usage by their child/ren, and accept responsibility for their child/ren's actions involving the use of their mobile phone.

Students are told, mobile phones are, **'never seen and never heard'**. Where this is not the case, phones may well be confiscated (and kept securely in the main office). There are of course exceptional circumstances such as students with diabetes who will need to monitor blood sugar levels, and teachers will be expected to use their professional judgement, or seek support from members of the Senior Leadership Team.

The Department for Education (DfE) guidance states the following, in relation to mobile phones in schools:

Schools can use a range of sanctions for breaching the mobile phone policy appropriate to their context, including confiscation and detentions. Furthermore, schools have the power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully. Staff should consider whether the confiscation is proportionate and consider any special circumstances relevant to the case. Headteachers are backed by the DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time they deem proportionate.

Guidance on school trips and visits.

School trips within the school day, the same policy applies as if in school. "Never seen/Never Heard"

Residential trips.

We understand the students will wish to take photos to record their trip. A curfew will be in place so students do not have phones in their rooms overnight. Students will be expected to

hand their phones in to a member of staff. Students are not permitted to take photos when in their rooms, so handing them over to staff in the evenings is part of safeguarding.

Commonly asked questions:

1. **What does Never Seen/Never Heard mean?** During the school day - in bags and turned off (or left at home).
2. **Are there any exceptions?**
 - No grey areas during the school day.
 - No phones in hands.
 - No headphones in ears.
 - No phones used in lessons.
 - No listening to music in lessons.
 - Smart watches are worn by some staff and some students. If they are being misused then the relevant tutor will be informed. Parents will be contacted and if necessary the smart watch left at home. Reminder to students that smart watches are banned from exams.
3. **What if a student is stopping for study support after school or a sporting fixture?** If students are stopping, outside of normal school hours, and a teacher would like a student to contact home to check regarding lifts home, then this is sensible professional judgement.
4. **What happens to a phone when is confiscated?** If a phone is confiscated, it is taken to the main office as soon as practically possible for safe keeping (locked storage).
5. **If a student is asked to hand their phone to a teacher but refuses, what will a teacher do next?** Senior Leadership Team(SLT)/call-out issued, and appropriate sanctions applied using the behaviour policy – typically this will mean the mobile is confiscated by the member of SLT/person on call-out and a sanction issued for defiance/non-compliance. Continued inappropriate use will result in school contacting parents and insisting the phone be kept at home.
6. **Do all issues with phones mean confiscation of the phone?** Yes. Form tutors will remind students at the start of every day to make sure their mobile phones are turned off. However, it is the individual student's responsibility to ensure they have done this, so if it makes a noise in lesson, it will be confiscated.