



THE STONEHENGE SCHOOL
NDR/dah

January 2018

Dear Parents,

School policy on the use of mobile telephones by pupils

As you are aware, we intend to review the school policy on mobile telephones towards the end of the current academic year. More detail about the rationale behind this can be found on page 21 of the student planner; it has also been communicated to parents via the website and to pupils in assemblies.

I have to advise you that based on the evidence available to me at present, a **total prohibition** on pupils having a mobile phone in school next year is looking increasingly probable. There is still too much inconsiderate, irresponsible and even anti-social use of mobile telephones. Despite the warnings issued by Progress Leaders and tutors, reinforced in assemblies by me, we are still encountering problems caused by inappropriate mobile phone use. In turn, this is using up a lot of staff time inefficiently. Examples of the issues, in no particular order, include:

- Pupils who feel unwell texting or calling their parents directly without reporting to the Reception staff or the medical room. This has resulted in parents contacting the school, or even turning up in Reception, where the staff have no knowledge of the child because he/she hasn't informed anyone at school.
- Pupils walking to and from school wearing headphones and unable to hear traffic as a result. This is highly unsafe, but particularly dangerous in winter when visibility is poor and the road surface wet.
- Confiscated telephones being left at Reception for parental collection, usually because they caused disruption in a lesson. Even more staff time is wasted when parents contact school asking for the phone to be returned to the child – this undermines the authority of teachers and is most unhelpful.
- Pupils who instead of reporting a concern to a staff member, contact parents directly in order to seek their involvement in a school based issue – which can include after school detentions, arguments or disputes with other pupils and allegations of bullying. It is further exacerbated when parents arrive in Reception and ask for a particular staff member to meet them, without contacting school in advance to ascertain whether the staff member is actually available.
- Irresponsible misuse of social media and internet chat rooms, which has led to instances of cyber bullying. Almost without exception it takes place during evenings, weekends and school holidays. Unfortunately the problems and tensions it creates are often brought into school and staff are expected to deal with them.

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I would like to make it clear that the list of examples is **NOT** typical of most children or their parents. The vast majority of children use their mobile telephones responsibly and the vast majority of parents are reasonable in their dealings with the school. However, the school is expanding quickly and in September there will be 775 children on roll, which means we will have dealings not only with them but approximately 1550 parents too – in total that's 2,300 + people to work with. Even if only a few per cent of these act inconsiderately and irresponsibly with their mobile phones it creates many of the problems I have listed, and in turn uses up staff time highly inefficiently.

I hope that pupils and parents will reflect upon this and, where necessary, aim to avoid situations like those I have described. I am grateful for your support in this matter.

Yours faithfully

Mr N D Roper
Head Teacher