



Head's Letter – June 2018

Dear Parent,

Thank you to everyone who completed the survey we sent out on 18th June about mobile devices. There have been over 400 responses and your feedback has been a huge help as we plan our approach for mobile devices for the next academic year.

I thought you might be interested in seeing the results of the survey:

- 69% of you think that spending too long using mobile devices affects a child's ability to learn
- 46% think that pupils at this school spend too much time on mobile devices. 25% don't know, and 28% do not think pupils spend too much time on mobile devices
- 27% think their own child spends too long on mobile devices at school. 45% don't think this is the case and 27% don't know
- 55% think their child spends too long on mobile devices at home
- 52% agree with the proposal not to allow pupils to have access to mobile devices during the extended day. 29% did not agree with the proposal, and 19% agreed in part, but made some suggestions for changes to the policy.

Some parents made comments about areas of the policy they are not entirely happy with. The main issue was the need to contact their child about picking them up, especially when a club/fixture is cancelled or the parent has to change their plans in terms of pick-up time. We have looked at how other schools handle this and they have found that pick-up times can be rearranged via the house phone or school office. This generally works very well.

Another area of concern was ensuring that phones are securely stored during the school day. Again, we have looked at how other schools handle this and we are adopting an approach that we think will work. Houses will have lockable cabinets which we are buying specifically for this purpose.

You might have seen the recent press coverage about the use of mobile devices in schools. Many education professionals believe that mobile devices can have a real impact on academic progress and can affect their emotional wellbeing. Indeed, Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector of Schools said "I am yet to be convinced of the educational benefits of all day access to Snapchat and the like; and the place of mobile phones in the classroom seems to me dubious at best".

After taking into account your feedback, the views of education professionals and also the experience of staff in dealing with fall-out from the use of mobile devices, I have decided to implement the proposed policy of removing mobile devices during the extended day. This will initially be a trial for one term, after which we will review how it has worked. If it goes well, we will make the change permanent.

I attach some Frequently Asked Questions but if you have any further questions please contact Mr Skidmore, Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding).

I really feel this change will benefit pupils by creating a better environment for them to learn and reducing harm from the negative impact of social media.

With best wishes

Mark Dixon
Headmaster

Frequently Asked Questions

	Question	Answer
1.	My child is a boarder. When will he/she have access to mobile devices?	Pupils in Year 3-9 will have access to their mobile phones after prep until bedtime. Pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 will be able to have their phones from 5.30pm until bedtime.
2.	Where will my child's phone be stored?	Phones will be stored in a safe locked cabinet in the boarding house
3.	Will my child be able to retrieve their phone quickly when they are about to come home?	Yes. House staff will have ready access to phones
4.	What if there is no answer on the house phone and I need to rearrange a pick up for my child?	Try calling again or email the house
5.	Will you be able to charge the phones when they are being stored?	No
6.	What if I want to contact my child during the school day?	If there's an emergency please contact the main school office