

9 October 2023

Dear Parent/carer,

You may be aware that the Secretary of State for Education has recently made a public commitment to ban mobile phones in all schools. This will align other schools with our policy that has seen mobile devices not permitted to be used in school for some time. I recognise that mobile phones are an integral part of our lives now and for young people in particular, they are an object of huge significance. I know that from a safety perspective, parents want their children to bring a phone to school in order to ensure that they can safely travel to and from the Academy.

UNESCO, the UN's education, science and culture agency, said there was evidence that excessive mobile phone use was linked to reduced educational performance and that high levels of screen time had a negative effect on children's emotional stability. They pose a significant safeguarding risk in schools, and contribute to disruption of the normal functioning of the Academy.

Contacting your child at school should not be done by mobile phone. Parents/carers should contact the main school phone line 01642 586262 if they need to pass a message to their child, or email enquiries@bishopsgarth.outwood.com. This will then be relayed at the earliest opportunity to their child in a lesson. If a child needs to contact home during the day they should speak to a member of the pastoral staff at social times (break/lunch). They will be permitted to use the school phone from an office to do so.

Our Positive Discipline for Learning and Life Policy states:

Mobile Phones

'Mobile phones have no place in school. Students in Years 7 to 11 are not permitted to use mobile phones on the school site. Phones should be turned off before the purple line and placed in the student's bag. Should a student require the use of mobile phone technology to manage medical conditions eg Type 1 diabetes, bluetooth hearing aids etc, this will be allowed and the student will carry a permission card. Should a student be seen with a mobile phone then they will be asked to turn off the phone and hand it over. The phone will be secured in the academy safe until a parent/carer can collect it (or as otherwise directed by the Regional Executive Principal). Any refusal to comply with this reasonable request will result in referral to the Principal for an appropriate and serious sanction to be issued. Reasonable adjustments are made for students who require their mobile phone for medical reasons such as hearing impairment, diabetes. These arrangements are agreed with individuals as appropriate'.

Should your child persist in not following this guidance, they will be subject to a home/school mobile phone agreement where you will be asked to direct your child not to bring their mobile phone to school, or hand their mobile phone in at reception upon arrival.

You will recognise that our aim is to safeguard your child and staff from unwanted photographs, videoing without permission and unkind or inappropriate comments on social media. The use of mobile phones as a recording device will be dealt with through the most severe sanctions available to the Head of School.

May I take this opportunity to remind you that if your child has not attended their morning registration in tutor time you will receive a text message at 8.45am to inform you of this. Please do not attempt to contact your child during the school day between 8.20am and 2.30pm. Should they still be absent during period 1, you will receive an absence call from a member of the pastoral staff.

I am grateful for your ongoing support to ensure that the Academy is a safe place for students and one free from distraction to learning.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Rhodes', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Jason Rhodes
Head of School