



5th December 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Smart phones

I am writing to you following my previous communication with regards to screens and smart phones. **It is the belief of our school that it is not appropriate for children under the age of 16 to have a smart phone.** This is because we are now seeing increasing numbers of our students addicted to these devices to the extent where they are completely controlled by them.

Unfortunately there has also been a significant increase in rude and offensive language being posted by students online outside of school hours. Often this is by students who would never even think about using this language face to face with other students. Many parents have also contacted us to say how worried they are about this.

For these reasons, I am writing to let you know that from now on, students will not be allowed to have a smart phone in their possession on the school site, this includes entry and exit into school at the start and end of the school day.

As such please can I ask you to choose one of the following options:

- Ensure that your son/daughter does not bring a smart phone into school and that it is left at home
- If your son/daughter needs a smart phone to communicate with you at the end of the school day then they will be required to hand this into their form tutors and collect it from the school office at the end of the day. However, I would heavily advise you to provide your son/daughter with a phone that is not a smart phone so that they can do this. These phones are readily available at various supermarkets and are phones without the ability to connect to the internet.

We will be checking student bags to ensure that they do not have a smart phone. If students are found with a smart phone, then these will be handed to the school office and we will require parents and carers to collect these, rather than the students.

I urge you to ensure that your son/daughter does not have access to a smart phone and to instead provide them with a phone that only allows phone calls and text messages. You will be pleased to know, next term we will also be selling these more basic phones in student services.

Thank you for your positivity and support with this matter in helping to ensure the safety and well-being of our students.

Yours sincerely

Mr Jonathan Watson
Associate Headteacher

Appendix – Smart phones and screens

The over use of a smart phone means that children become addicted, monopolised and then controlled by this device. This addiction can be seen when children cannot eat a meal, hold a conversation or socialise with friends without regular checking of their phone. More worryingly the comfort blanket of a screen and the lack of face to face conversations lead to the rise of online bullying and results in children saying things that they would not normally dream of saying.

We notice that a recent survey by Deloitte concluded that half of 16-24 years olds think that they use the smartphone too much. Worryingly 79% of respondents said they check phones within hour of going to sleep and 55% within 15 minutes of waking up. These products are made more and more addictive because it will make companies more money. If they are hooked as children, then they are hooked for life.

The addiction can cause mental health problems, loneliness and a break down in family communication and the inability to concentrate for more than 20 seconds. It can also lead to anxiety, insomnia and relationship issues. Unfortunately it leads to children craving instant gratification, by counting views, likes and subscribers rather than appreciating the delayed benefits of effort and hard work.

We have found it interesting that several of the big tech CEOs do not actually allow their children to own smartphones and when they are older don't allow them unsupervised access to the internet on their phones. Steve Jobs actually said that his children did not use the Apple technology because he thought it was too dangerous. Both he and Bill Gates preferred that their children spend time around the dinner table talking about books and history. They are the very people that produced and distributed this technology.