



Plymouth High School for Girls

"For life, not school, we learn"

15 March 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this finds you well.

I should like to thank all the parents who contributed to our mobile phone consultation, it has really helped us to formulate our position going forward. In addition to our parent and full staff consultation, we also looked at what other Grammar schools in the South West are doing or plan to do. We also reviewed what other local secondary schools are doing as well as other Trust schools. As part of our investigation, we also reflected on the recent messages from Gillian Keegan [please see here](#) (Secretary of State for Education) around mobile phone use in schools and the recent high profile cases on the impact of inappropriate phone use.

The most popular consultation response from staff was for a complete phone ban for students in years 7 to 11, this was the second most popular response from parents. Interestingly, parents of younger children were very much in favour of a complete ban. A complete ban for 7 to 11 is common in most secondary schools and is in line with the non-statutory guidance from Gillian Keegan.

After careful consideration, I can announce our new arrangements. The new rules for mobile phone use will be live from **Monday 15th April 2024**. This information will be shared with students, and tutors will remind them of the new rules throughout the last few weeks of term.



We have decided on the following

Years 7 to 11

A complete ban on mobile phone use for years 7 to 11 from when students arrive on the school site to when they leave the school site. This includes all lessons, break and lunchtime. Students will not be able to use their phones as calculators or to take pictures or for any other purpose. Year 7 students will still be expected to hand their phones in as they currently do.

Students will be permitted to bring their phone to school as we know that for many students their bus pass or means of payment is on their phone and many parents appreciate the geopositioning facility that their children's phone provides.

Phones must be away in bags (except year 7 who will have handed theirs in), not blazer pockets and they must be switched off whilst students are on the school site.

In the very unlikely event that a student does not follow our new rules, we will have a simple sanction system. If a student is found with their phone out during the day it will be confiscated for the remainder of that day and an after school 1 hour detention will be set. Our hope is that we do not get to this position and I would be grateful if parents would have a conversation with their child(ren) about our new policy and why it has been introduced (perhaps referring to the PHSG consultation and the guidance from Gillian Keegan). The introduction of this policy is designed to better support students and protect them from the negative impact of inappropriate phone use.

More vulnerable children

If your child relies on their phone to support an enhanced need, please contact Mrs Payne (SendCo and designated safeguarding lead) at Sam.Payne@phsg.tsat.uk. Unless an alternative provision has been agreed in advance with Mrs Payne, all students will be required to follow the new policy.

Arrangements for sixth form students

Sixth form students will not be permitted to use their phones whilst moving about on the school site, and they will not be able to use their phones in lessons other than under the express permission of their teacher. Express permission to use a phone in lessons would be rare and only for capturing crucial learning information that might otherwise be lost. Almost all learning information is currently captured on Teams, so we would not expect there to be many occasions where permission was given. Phone

use in lessons will not be permitted for research, as a calculator or to listen to music. We feel that these measures will significantly increase student's focus and attention on their learning and limit distractions.

Sixth form students would not be permitted to use their phone in any part of the school except in the sixth form study centre. This includes moving back and forward between classes and in any communal space including the library. In the unlikely event that a sixth form student does not follow our new arrangements, the sanction system will be the same for sixth form students as it is for years 7 to 11. Their phone will be confiscated for the remainder of that day and an after school 1 hour detention will be set.

Unless in the sixth form study centre, sixth form students would be expected to have their phones switched off and away in their bags whilst on the school site.

Parents contacting their children

Parents wishing to contact their child urgently during the school day should call reception and a member of staff will collect their child so that they can speak to their parent. Should a child wish to contact their parent urgently during the day, they should go to reception to request support.

I would like to thank parents in advance for their support with our new mobile phone arrangements. We believe the new arrangements are in the best interests of all students and will help us to encourage students to be less reliant on their phones and to try and protect them a little more from the negative effect of inappropriate phone use.

Best wishes,



Simon Underdown.
Headteacher.