

## Beverley High School

### Mobile Phone Policy (Years 7-11)

Mobile phones are a part of modern society; however, there are many concerns regarding the impact of phones on mental health, particularly on anxiety and depression;<sup>1</sup> attention spans; learning and cyber bullying. Research also indicates that the latter is more serious with girls and the 'reported prevalence rates of cyberbullying at age 15 were almost double those for 11-year olds'<sup>2</sup>. It is also believed that 'Almost a quarter of young people are so dependent on their smartphones that it becomes like an addiction, suggests research by psychiatrists'.<sup>3</sup> Our recent surveys also indicate that parents, staff and students are concerned about the impact of mobile phones.

At Beverley High School we want to support parents / carers with educating young people on how to use technology and social media responsibly. Phones are a useful tool, especially where the issue of safety during the journey to and from school is concerned; also, through the use of Edulink, mobile phones provide an effective form of communication between staff and pupils outside of lesson and it provides a platform to share resources for Independent Learning, and finally, the internet can provide useful websites to support learning. However, teachers and students have a right to teach and learn in a school environment which is free from interruption by mobile phones. In addition, we are a tolerant school and believe that it is important to show students how we can adopt a controlled use of mobile phones rather than a blanket ban on their use. We want students to develop social skills and learn how to interact with their peers without their mobile phones. Therefore, our policy aims to provide a framework of good practice for the use of mobile phones.

#### **When can a mobile phone be used?**

- 1) Mobile devices can only be used during lessons at the **explicit** instruction of classroom staff.
- 2) Phones may be used before the school day **officially starts at 8.40am**. Students need to be seated in their form room. Students are not allowed to walk around with their phones. In addition, students are not permitted to walk through the school gates using their phone, their mobile device needs to be in their bag when they arrive to school.
- 3) Phones may be used during the lunch break 12.35-1.25. Students need to be seated in one of the designated classrooms for their year group or alternatively on one of the benches in the corridor. Students are not allowed to walk around school using their phones.
- 4) The use of the mobile phone is allowed when it is used for medical reasons, for example, diabetes monitoring.
- 5) In the LRC during after 3.35pm to allow students to check their IL and to communicate with their parents/carers about collection.
- 6) Mobile devices can be used in after school clubs at the **explicit** instruction of a member of staff this is to allow students to organise transport home.

#### **When is the use of a mobile phone forbidden?**

- 1) Mobile phones need to be switched off and in the student's bag during the school day.

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<sup>1</sup> Education research report March 2016 '*Study links mobile device addiction to depression and anxiety*'

<sup>2</sup> Public Health England '*Cyberbullying: An analysis of data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey for England, 2014*'

<sup>3</sup> Sean Coughlan BBC News family and education correspondent, Smartphone 'addiction': Young people 'panicky' when denied mobiles

- 2) Students are not permitted to walk through the school gates with their phone in their hand / pocket. It is encouraged that students interact with staff on the school gates rather than looking at their phone, being engaged in a phone call or listening to music.
- 3) Phones are not allowed during the morning break. (This is a comfort break, a time to talk in between lessons and to have a light snack in preparation for the following lessons.)
- 4) Mobile device use is banned for everyone during transit times – lesson crossover, entering/exiting classrooms, lining up, moving classrooms, on the stairs etc.
- 5) Phones cannot be used whilst walking around the school during the lunch break 12.35-1.25pm.
- 6) Pupils are not permitted to listen to music in lessons, any use must have a direct link to teaching and learning and will be monitored closely by staff.
- 7) Photographs and videos cannot be taken unless under the explicit instruction from a member of staff.

### **How will this policy be enforced?**

The use of a phone contrary to this policy will result in the confiscation of the mobile until the end of the day. All phones need to be put away at 8.40am, phones will be confiscated by form tutors if they are out after 8.40am. Students will not be given a warning.<sup>4</sup> In the first instance the student may collect their phone at the end of the school day. If this happens a second time a parent / carer will need to collect the child's phone. Any further incidents will result in the student losing their phone during school hours for the following 5 days. The student will hand their phone into reception at the beginning of the day and will collect their phone at 3.35pm. Phones will be placed in an envelope and kept in the school safe.

### **The use of social media**

The widespread availability and use of social media and social networking applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with a variety of audiences. The use of social media has implications for our duty to safeguard young children. The school cannot take responsibility for activity on social media. Parents assume responsibility for their child's behaviour in this regard. However, Beverley High School will not tolerate bullying. Therefore, action will be taken if a pupil uses social media to bully another student of Beverley High School. We encourage parents / carers to screenshot the abuse/ bullying and to report it to the Year Leader or a member of SLT. Action will also be taken if we believe that the use of social media is placing a young person at immediate risk. Sanctions will also be imposed if social media brings Beverley High School into disrepute. The following sanctions will be used for the inappropriate use of social media; confiscation of the phone during school hours for a length of time which is appropriate for level of social media misuse; after school detention; internal exclusion in Withdrawal and for more serious cases a fixed-term exclusion.

The school will provide a variety of opportunities for students to learn about the negative impact of social media; assemblies; discussion topics in form time; through schemes of work in Computer Science; Wellbeing days and the Personal Development aspects of the Super Curriculum.

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<sup>4</sup> Pupils are not given a warning as this may lead to inconsistencies with how the policy is embedded and applied. One of our main aims is to be consistent and fair in our approach.