



**St Cuthbert's  
Catholic High School**  
*Live life in all its fullness*

Berrys Lane  
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**Headteacher:**  
Mr Stuart Holland BA (Hons) QTS

25 October 2024

Dear parents/carers

## **Re-Focus of the Mobile Phone Policy**

You may be aware that the government has recently updated its guidance on the use of mobile phones in school - it is now prohibited for children to use their personal mobile phones in school.

At St. Cuthbert's Catholic High School, we accept and understand that personal mobile phones and tablets are often given to students by their parents/carers to ensure their safety and personal security, whilst students may wish to bring their personal devices to school for a variety of other reasons.

As a school, we understand the benefits such devices offer, as well as how the use of mobile phones in school can sometimes jeopardise the learning environment. We must therefore strike a balance between ensuring personal safety and wellbeing and maintaining an appropriate learning environment for our students.

We are therefore writing to

- Share some of the research referred to in the guidance on the use of mobile phones by children.
- Explain how the school is expected to comply with the new guidance
- Explain our mobile phone policy for students

Please also watch my video that also explains our mobile phone policy <https://tinyurl.com/mrkei2jp>

## **Children's mobile phone use: facts and figures**

- By the age of 12, 97% of children own a mobile phone. (Ofcom)
- The majority of 8-11-year-olds (63%) use social media and messaging apps. This rises to 93% for children between 12 and 15 years old. (Ofcom)
- 29% of secondary school students (rising to 40% for KS4 students) reported mobile phones being used without permission in most of their lessons. (The National Behaviour Survey (2021-2022))
- Mobile phones have already been prohibited or restricted in countries worldwide, such as France and The Netherlands.
- Screen time can displace positive activities. (Royal College Paediatrics and Child Health; 2019)
- One in five children have experienced bullying online. (Office of National Statistics; 2020)

## **Government guidance**

The new government guidance states that schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones and other smart technology throughout the school day, this includes during lessons, between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. The guidance gives schools examples to illustrate the different ways in which a mobile phone-free environment can be achieved:

- No mobile phones on the school premises – all phones to be kept at home
- Mobile phone handed in on arrival – phones will be returned to students at the end of the school day
- Mobile phones kept in secure location – for example, kept in lockers, or similar secure storage and not accessed throughout the school day
- Never used, seen, or heard – students keep possession of their mobile phones only on the strict condition that they are never used, seen, or heard





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We have opted to follow the government guidance that mobile phones are never used, seen or heard, where students keep possession of their mobile phones on the strict condition that they are never used, seen or heard.

Students should not use their mobile phone or other personal electronic devices during the school day between the hours of 8.30am and 3.00pm. When they enter the school site, their mobile phone should be switched off and placed at the bottom of their bag. Their phone should not be visible in their blazer pocket. It is important that all students are clear on the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones in the school, and the consequences and sanctions for not following it. We are meeting with all students on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October to inform them and give them time to process this information over the half term break. We will continue to remind students during our form tutor periods after half term. Students will be taught the risks that are associated with the use of mobile phones, both in school and more broadly, to ensure they understand the decision being taken by the school to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day.

As partners in your child's education, you have an important role in supporting the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones in school. We would appreciate your support in discussing and reinforcing any policy changes at home, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment.

If you need to contact your child during the school day, you should contact the school office, where staff will relay any messages and facilitate contact.

### **Sanctions**

The use of sanctions in school is always seen as a last resort; however, occasions may arise where students decide to breach the provisions set out in the school policy.

The guidance states that schools have the power to:

- Confiscate mobile phones or similar devices for a period of time deemed appropriate by the headteacher.
- Search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the student is in possession of a prohibited item - this now includes mobile phones and other personal electronic devices.

St Cuthbert's sanction process is as follows:

- If the mobile phone is seen, it will be confiscated in the first instance.
- The mobile phone will be handed to the main office and a parent/carer will need to come and collect the phone. We will not hand the mobile back to the child even if permission is given over the phone.
- If this happens a second time, the student will have a ban on bringing their mobile on site at all, and will face a period of time in the Melrose/Suspension for breaching our rules.

As always, we thank you for your continued support. You are invited to contact the school with any questions or concerns regarding the new guidance.

Yours faithfully

Mr S Holland  
Headteacher

