

## **No mobile phones or electronic devices at Parkside Community School from 8 July 2024**

12 June 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

You may be aware that earlier this year the Secretary of State for Education made a public commitment to ban mobile phones and electronic devices in all schools. This approach will be adopted at Parkside Community School from Monday 8 July. The change will align Parkside to the Department of Education's guidance as well as other schools in our locality; most have seen mobile phone and electronic devices not permitted for some time.

This morning I met our students in assemblies to discuss this change. I discussed the benefits of creating a 'no mobile phone school'; these are listed below:

- **Improves learning**: It removes distractions and enables students to be fully present and engaged
- **Improves mental health**: Studies show that mobile phone use can be an addiction and causes worry, anxiety and/or depression
- **Improves social skills**: Students can spend more time socialising face to face with friends which has a positive impact on wellbeing. In England 3 in 10 students say making and maintaining friendships affects their mental health
- **Reduces peer pressure**: Associated with owning what are often expensive devices
- **Creates a safe space at school**: Students are protected from the risks and dangers associated with social media and cyber-bullying. In England 1 in 5 students say they have experienced bullying online

UNESCO, the UN's education, science and culture agency, state there is evidence that excessive mobile phone use is linked to reduced educational performance and that high levels of screen time have a negative effect on children's emotional stability.

I recognise that mobile phones and electronic devices are an integral part of our lives now and for young people in particular, they are objects of huge significance. I know that from a safety perspective, parents/carers want their children to bring a phone to school in order to ensure that they can safely travel to and from school and this will still be possible as we adopt a **never used, seen or heard** approach. This will allow students to bring mobile phones and electronic devices with them to school but they must be turned off in their school bags before they enter the school site.

### **Never used, seen or heard – how will it work?**

On 8 July mobile phones and electronic devices such as ear phones, airpods or smart watches will have no place in our school. Students will not be permitted to use these on the school site. Mobile phones and electronic devices should be turned off before students enter the school grounds and placed in the student's bag.

Should a student be seen with a mobile phone or electronic device they will be asked to turn this off and hand it to the member of staff.

It will be securely locked away until the end of the school day then the student may collect it from the Parkside Support Centre. Any refusal to comply with this reasonable request will result in the student being removed from their normal timetabled lessons and social times to learn in a designated area away from their peers.

Please note that reasonable adjustments will be made for students who require the use of mobile phone technology to manage medical conditions e.g. Type 1 diabetes, Bluetooth hearing aids, etc. These arrangements will be agreed with individuals as appropriate so they are able to support their area of need without consequence.

Should a child persist in not following the school's rules on mobile phones and electronic devices, they will be subject to a home/school mobile phone agreement where parents/carers will be asked to direct their child not to bring their mobile phone to school, or hand their mobile phone in at the school gate upon arrival.

### **Contacting your child at school should not be done by mobile phone.**

Parents/carers should contact the main school phone line 01246 273458 if they need to pass a message to their child, or email [Info@parkside.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:Info@parkside.derbyshire.sch.uk). 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 (brunch/lunch). They will be permitted to use the school phone from an office to do so.

The results from our December 2023 parental questionnaire gave a resounding backing for mobile phones and electronic devices to be banned at Parkside. I am grateful for your ongoing support to ensure that Parkside is a safe place for students and one free from distraction to learning. If you have any queries, please get in touch with us at [Info@parkside.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:Info@parkside.derbyshire.sch.uk).

Yours faithfully

Mr Andy Kelly  
Headteacher