

24th May 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

Revised Guidance for Mobile Phones and Devices at School

At Welling school we are continually working to ensure the environment your child attends is safe, purposeful and without distraction. With this in mind and in order to reflect new government guidance on the use of mobile phones in schools, we will be updating the school's rules in relation to mobile phones and devices, including smartwatches. This decision has taken into account parent/carers views at our most recent Parent Forum, student voice through our student council as well as staff views and feedback and importantly incorporates government guidance for all UK schools which has recently been released. Students have been made informed through their student bulletin as well as year group assemblies.

The point behind this move in government guidance and our subsequent revision of rules is ultimately to maintain a high expectations learning environment where students are not distracted from the core reason they are in school - their learning, progress and achievement. Removing mobile phones from schools also benefits students' mental health and will reduce the pressure we all know our young people live around - especially from social media. Without access to their mobile phones and the unfiltered internet access provided, pupils can focus on the present, the people around them and their education and school staff can spend more time teaching and supporting pupils.

The rules are simple and easy to follow:

- Students must not use or have their phone seen or heard. If this does occur it will be confiscated immediately by the member of staff.
- The phone will be kept securely in reception until a parent/carers comes to collect. Phones **will not** be returned to students under any circumstances.
- Students who do not comply immediately will be sent to our internal suspension centre (Berwick Centre) for the day until 1630. If at this point the phone is still not handed over they will be externally suspended from school.

We understand that some students travel distances and also that in the winter months students may be travelling home in the dark and we acknowledge that parents and students would like the opportunity to have their phone for use before and after school. Which this rule still allows.

Headteacher

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Building Successful Futures

The Kemnal Academies Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under company number 7348231. Its registered address is, The Atkins Centre, Kemnal Technology College, Sevenoaks Way, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 5AA. Welling School is a business name used by The Kemnal Academies Trust



Please note except in significant extenuating pre arranged circumstances such as for diabetic monitoring, students phones will be confiscated. If there are emergencies or concerns that mean the student needs to be informed urgently this should be communicated through the school office and the students care team. We would also welcome parents/carers to inform the school if there is personal circumstance that should be considered and supported, though this would not involve their mobile phone. Students who wish to call home in the school day can do this via the Year Care Team offices upon request. Our Behaviour Team will also be able to support this if necessary.

We would like to thank you for your support with this measure.

Yours faithfully



Tom Knight
Deputy Headteacher

Headteacher

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Frequently Asked Questions

Why do parents have to collect?

When school and home work together, outcomes for students are much higher. It is well documentate the negative impact phones can have, particularly when distracting learners. We do not anticipate that we will need to confiscate your child's phone as the expectation is so clear. We hope that this deterrent will ensure you have the conversation with your child prior to their return but also reiterate the expectation should you be informed of the confiscation.

Can a sibling or friend collect the phone or does it have to be a parent/carer?

Unfortunately it can only be the parent/carer we have on file who can collect the phone, this is to ensure that we maintain standards but also do not misplace trust and give the phone to someone by mistake.

How will I be notified if my childs phone has been confiscated?

A school email will be sent through the school office to inform you of the confiscation. This will also appear on the parent Arbor app.

Does this include sixth form?

Yes the no mobile phone policy applies to all students however a slight adjustment is permitted to sixth formers as they will be allowed to use these in their designated spaces such as the sixth form centre.

What about if students leave their belongings such as in a changing room for PE?

The PE staff will offer to take in valuables at the start of the lesson and return at the end. This is a supportive measure but the school will not take any responsibility for loss, theft or damage

Does this include staff?

Further detail can be sought in section 4 of the Mobile Device Policy but staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. They are permitted in offices and designated areas such as reception and the staff room.

What about school trips?

Students must not have their phone on school trips. With residential and international trips the Headteacher will make a decision with the Educational Visits Coordinator on a case-by-case basis.

Does this include smartwatches?

As technology is and continues to improve, a number of watches are now able to send and receive calls and texts, play music as well as receive notifications and alerts. As this can also be a distraction



this policy does also include smartwatches. Therefore smart watches such as Apple watches are also not allowed and will be confiscated.

Do the phones need to be off or can they be on silent?

It is strongly advised that the phone is not brought to school but if it is unavoidable then it must be turned off and placed away from the student, such as in a bag. If a phone is seen, used or heard (including vibration) it will be confiscated.

What about if teachers ask my child to use their phone in lesson?

It has been made clear to all staff that this must not be the case and it should be assumed no student has their phone in school.

Does this include social times when students are not in lesson?

Yes this includes from the moment they walk through one of our main gates until they leave the main gate. This includes walking to and from the gates, travelling between lessons, in lessons, break and lunchtime as well as whilst in the toilet and offices.

What if the mobile device is confiscated on a friday or before a holiday?

Regrettably the phone will remain locked and secured until collection. The school does usually close during the school holidays and weekends therefore it is once again advisable your child's phone is not seen, used or heard during the school day. In the event that a confiscation has happened on the last day of term a phone call will be made to make necessary arrangements.

What if as a parent/carer I physically cannot collect the mobile device?

In this instance please liaise with your child's Year Care Team, the school will keep the phone stored until an arrangement can be made.