

POLICY UPDATED SEPT 2020 TO REFLECT NO LUNCHTIME DETENTIONS DURING CORONAVIRUS PERIOD

Aims

The term 'phone' in this policy denotes mobiles phones, iPods, MP3, MP4 players and any similar portable electronic devices.

The School recognises that mobile phones, cameras and digital devices are now an integral part of our culture and can be of considerable value, particularly in relation to personal safety. However, balanced with this is the need to safeguard children and staff from cyber bullying, inappropriate use of the Internet and telecommunications, and the misuse of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram.

This policy has been compiled after consultation with parents, students and staff through briefings, questionnaires and the Headteacher's weekly letter.

The policy at BHS is that student phones are banned from the school site during the academic day.

The primary reason for this is:

- Student Wellbeing: phones are excellent 'tools', which can help to make aspects of our lives easier or more interesting. However, we have noticed an increasing pattern of over-reliance on these devices, with more students displaying signs of 'phone addiction', where the desire to check/use/be on the phone seems to control their lives. In such cases, the phone often becomes the single most important focus of their lives, to the detriment of other key areas: meaningful communication, exercise, participation in clubs/extra-curricular activities, ability to concentrate for longer periods, a good night's sleep and so on.

Additional reasons:

- Safeguarding: to reduce the potential for inappropriate communications between peers and to prevent vulnerable students from being targeted through malicious phone use
- To reduce the number of confrontations over phone use in school, where too much staff time is being wasted dealing with 'phone-fallout', rather than being spent on improving provision for students
- To improve levels of attention and concentration in lessons by removing the distraction/temptation of phones from students who cannot resist the constant urge to be checking/texting etc.

Aside from the above reasons, it has been shown that the effect of banning mobile phones from school premises adds up to the equivalent of an extra week's schooling over a pupil's academic year. This is according to research by Louis-Philippe Beland and Richard Murphy, published by the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics.

"Ill Communication: The Impact of Mobile Phones on Student Performance" found that after schools banned mobile phones, the test scores of students aged 16 improved by 6.4%. The economists reckon that this is the "equivalent of adding five days to the school year".

According to Beland and Murphy, a phone ban produced improvements in test scores among students, with the lowest-achieving students gaining twice as much as average students. The ban had a greater positive impact on students with special education needs and those eligible for free school meals, while having no discernible effect on high achievers.

"We found that not only did student achievement improve, but also that low-achieving and low-income students gained the most. We found the impact of banning phones for these students was equivalent to an additional hour a week in school, or to increasing the school year by five days."

Journey to and from Home

The school recognises that parents/carers in a rural community feel the need for their children to have access to a mobile phone for communication during the journey to or from school. This helps with safeguarding and child protection especially in the long dark winter months.

BHS supports this approach wholeheartedly.

To that end BHS has adopted the following mobile phone best use policy:

- Students are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school to ensure their personal safety at all times during their journey
- If a student brings their phone to school then on arrival at school their phone is to be placed immediately in their locker (every student is issued with their own locker)
- The phone can be retrieved from their locker only at the end of the school day. Not before and not during any period of social time (break or lunch)
- Any requirement for a parent/carer to contact a student or a student to contact their parent/carer can be done through the school reception or through the Pastoral Support Team at appropriate times in the school day.

Consequences of inappropriate use of the mobile phone:

If a student is seen with a phone on the school site, it will be confiscated. This includes the morning arrival before the first bell goes, it applies to both indoor and outdoor locations, and it includes phones sticking out of pockets or seen in bags. See the table below for our confiscation actions.

Violation 1	Mobile phone confiscated, held in a secure place in the pastoral office and returned at the end of the school day when the student comes to collect it. 30 min after-school detention issued.
Violation 2	Mobile phone confiscated, held in a secure place until parent is able to collect. Phone will only be handed back to the parent/carer at an agreed time. 60 min after-school detention issued to student.
Violation 3	As per Violation 2, plus 1 day in Inclusion. Signed contract with parent that student will leave phone at home for 2 week period.

Mobile Phone Confiscation

Staff to ensure phone is placed in a clearly labelled envelope and ensure that it is taken to pastoral support for safekeeping. Under no circumstances should any member of staff keep the phone longer than is necessary. Staff confiscating the phone must log this on SIMS to keep a tally of how many times a student has had their phone confiscated.

Once the phone is 'booked' into the office by the Pastoral Support Team it will be locked away safely. A manual entry will be made into the Confiscation Log.

Refusal to hand a phone over to members of staff, or to comply with a search where a student is suspected of having a phone with them, will result in a referral to Inclusion and potential exclusion should the student persistently refuse to comply.

Exceptions

In very rare circumstances, a student may have specific medical conditions that require them to have a mobile phone on their person at all times as a safeguarding precaution. In such cases, a Phone Pass may be issued by the Headteacher, on the understanding that the phone will only be used at appropriate times and in line with their health plan.

Some students, (especially those from Service families or Young Carers) may need to contact home during the day. They will still be able to do this through the pastoral office, using a school phone.

Certain field trips or activities out of school may require students to have their phones with them. In such cases, this will be communicated to students and parents in advance.

5. Use of Personal Mobile Phones for Staff

The school recognises that personal mobile phones have the potential to be used inappropriately. Mobile phones should never be used to take photographs or video of children.

Personal mobile phones should not generally be needed or used by staff, except as set out in the guidelines below:

- Should Staff need to use their mobile phone, best practice is that mobile phones, wherever possible, should not be used in the presence of the children.
- Mobile phones must not be used during lesson times either to make or receive calls/texts/emails etc unless there is an emergency.
- Staff should not use their phone while on duty (except for emergencies), this includes the checking of work emails.
- Staff should never give their mobile phone number to any pupils. This also includes past pupils under the age of 18 years.
- Staff should exercise caution when giving their mobile number to parents as this could be misconstrued. The school is aware that some staff members are also parents at the school. If in doubt discuss this with a member of the SLT.
- PE staff may use their mobile phones during PE sessions and when responsible for children away from school, only to communicate arrangements to parents or colleagues or for emergency purposes.
- Trips and Visits Offsite: The staff member in charge should take one of the school mobile phones when off site. This phone should be used when communicating with parents. Other staff members on the trip or offsite should carry their mobile phones so they can communicate with colleagues when necessary or in an emergency.
- Staff Mobile phones (including personal mobile phones) could contain confidential information regarding other members of staff such as personal phone numbers, e-mail addresses or pictures.
- All mobile phones brought onto the premises (including personal mobile phones) should have a password locking system enabled to ensure that their contents remain secure in the case of loss.

Responsibility for lost phones and Disclaimer

As previously stated it is understood why parents may want their child to bring a mobile phone into school in a rural community. Whereas this is understood and as such we have provided lockers for these phones to be placed in, the School retains no liability for any phone that is brought into school which is either lost, stolen or damaged or used in a manner which is against the owner's consent.

The School's advice is to leave mobiles at home and make any necessary contact through main reception. If however a parent/carer has purchased a locker and the student's phone is deposited in that locker for the day, the responsibility for that phone rests with the parent/carer and the student.