

27th May 2016

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Montgomery High School we annually review and evaluate our policies to improve the school and moreover to ensure that our students make the necessary progress they deserve. As a result of this review, we feel as a school it is necessary to make some changes to our Mobile Devices Policy, which originally was based on a balance of fairness and the need within particular curriculum areas for specific usage within the classroom.

However, as parents will fully appreciate, mobile technology combined with the expansion in social networking sites and mobile gaming has meant that during the school day such temptations can become a huge distraction to student learning. Indeed, research undertaken by several leading Universities suggests mobile usage in schools is having a direct negative impact on overall student attainment. Furthermore, discussions with our students have revealed major concerns amongst the student body. In particular, listening to our students, who quite rightly, have cited concerns around their individual personal safety, on-line social networking, cyber-bullying and inappropriate texting, which all play a part in unsettling the core business of their learning during the school day.

We fully appreciate that many parents will want their children to have a mobile device on them for personal safety reasons; for contact to and from school, which is completely understandable and fully supported. However emergency contact to students can be gained through the school's reception as is the procedure at the present time.

Therefore, starting on Monday 6th June 2016: Mobile/Smart devices should not be seen in school; they should not be seen on the corridors or in classrooms. In addition, they are not to be used at break or lunchtimes. Upon entering the school site they need to be put away safely until the end of the school day. This is a very clear, simple message, which is non-negotiable. Through working in partnership with parents we look to fully introduce this change in culture, quickly and smoothly. Students not complying with this will be warned by their teachers in line with the school behaviour policy. Teachers may confiscate devices if warnings are not heeded during the lesson. If devices are confiscated they will be returned to students at the end of the school day. Should any student dispute this procedure the device will remain locked securely in the school safe until such time parents are able to come into school to collect them. We would always look to avoid this scenario, however, should it be necessary parent/carers will be expected to pick up the device after 3.00 p.m. at the end of the school day.

Please would you discuss the new policy with your child and ensure they understand the consequences of not following directions with regards to the use of mobile phones.

We thank you in advance of your support, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via school.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Kilmurray
Associate Principal