



THE CONSORTIUM
ACADEMY TRUST

July 2024

Secondary – Mobile Phones



**THE
HESSLE
ACADEMY**

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Dear Parent/Carer

I write to you to inform you of a change that we intend to make to our Behaviour Policy with effect from September 2024, which relates specifically to the use of mobile devices.

From this date, it will no longer be permitted for students to use mobile phones or other electronic or internet-enabled devices anywhere on the school site.

There are a multitude of reasons for this decision which include:

- The Government have issued repeated and clear guidance that they believe that the use of mobile phones should not be permitted in schools. This is supported by extensive research evidence and has been adopted by our Trust as part of a Trust-wide Behaviour Policy which comes into effect from September 2024.
- Research studies found that after schools banned mobile phones, the test scores of 16-year-old students improved by 6% - the equivalent of adding five days to the school year. For vulnerable students, the increase can be as much as 14%.
- The social use of mobile phones actively works against our school vision in that it discourages social interaction and conversation, thereby limiting a child's ability to develop character and cultural awareness.
- Students at Hessle High School often use their phones to access social media. While there are many benefits to the sensible use of social media, we do not believe that this has any place within the school environment, and this can often lead to disputes between peers which can lead to significant distractions from learning.

We recognise that students may need to bring a mobile phone to school in order that they can contact parents, carers or other family members on the way to, or from, school. Therefore, we have decided not to issue a total ban on mobile phones on the school site. However, once inside the school safeguarding gates, all phones should be switched off and stored away in a bag. If a student is seen to use, or attempts to use, a mobile phone then the phone will be confiscated by a member of staff.

Please note that this also applies to any other internet-enabled device including iPads, Apple Watches or similar.

If a student has their phone confiscated by a member of staff, it will be held securely in the Student Services office. A member of the Student Services team will then contact parents/carers. The phone will be held until a parent or carer can come into school to collect the phone. Phones will be collected from reception.

We hope that you understand the reasons for this change in policy and will support us with its implementation by speaking to your child about the sensible use of their mobile phones and, should they wish to continue bringing their phones into school, that they do not attempt to use them.

Please also note that, under exceptional circumstances, we reserve the right to ensure compliance with this policy under the provisions of the Academy's Search Policy.

We recognise that this change may take some time to get used to and therefore we are introducing an implementation period of **two weeks at the start of the new term** where the following will apply:

- If a student uses, or attempts to use, their mobile device inside the school buildings, it will be confiscated by a member of staff. This is the current policy and there is no reason why a student would forget or fail to comply with this.
- If a student uses, or attempts to use, their mobile device anywhere else on the school site, they will be given a polite warning and instructed to switch their phone off and put it away. It will not be confiscated provided that they comply with this immediately.
- If a student does not comply with the instruction to put their mobile device away, then it will be confiscated, and the behaviour may be treated as defiance.

We firmly believe that this change in policy will create a more purposeful learning environment enabling students to focus on their learning and on social interaction.

We realise that this change may raise some queries. For that reason, there follows a series of questions that have been asked by students, staff, and parents during our consultation on this change.

Yours faithfully



Mr V Groak
Headteacher

Frequently Asked Questions

My daughter needs her phone so she can contact her older siblings after school. Does this mean she can't bring her phone to school?

No. She can continue to bring her phone to school and may use it outside the school buildings after 3pm. However, it must be out of sight between 8.15am and 3pm.

My son uses his phone to remind him of what homework he has to do and stores his timetable on his phone. Will he be punished if he gets his phone out to check his timetable?

All students will be issued with a Student Planner next year in which they can record their timetables and homework. There will be no need to use his phone to do so. If he has his phone in sight in the school building it will be confiscated.

If students forget and get their phone out, will they get a warning, or will it be confiscated the first time they forget?

Students will be told of this change before the end of the academic year. They will also be reminded in September, and, in the first two weeks of term, a grace period will apply where students will be reminded to put their phones away. **From Monday 16 September 2024**, the policy will apply in full and students will have their phones confiscated if it is seen.

If my daughter has her phone confiscated, what will happen to it? How can I be sure that it won't get lost?

We do not recommend that students bring very expensive phones and devices into school in case they are lost. If your daughter wishes to bring her phone to school, she should keep it out of sight. If it is confiscated, it will be secured safely in the Student Services office until it can be collected by a parent/carer.

If my son has his phone confiscated and I can't get into school to collect it, what will happen? Will he have to come home without his phone? I am worried that this might put him at risk.

Student safety remains our main priority and will always be of paramount importance. If a student uses their phone in school and has it confiscated, we will endeavour to contact a parent or carer to collect the phone. However, if we cannot contact you or if you cannot come in to collect it, we will return the phone to the student at 3pm. However, the student will be required to hand their phone in to the Student Services office the next day and this will only be returned at 3pm.

My daughter is very attached to her phone and will not want to hand it over if she mistakenly uses it in school. What will happen then?

All of our school policies are designed to keep students safe and to ensure the most positive environment for learning. If a student refuses to comply with any policy, including those that relate to mobile phones and devices, this will be treated as defiance and will be treated accordingly.

My son sometimes gets anxious and likes to keep in touch with me during the school day. How can he keep in touch if he isn't allowed to use his phone?

If your son feels anxious, he should report to the Student Services office who will help him and, if necessary, they will contact you.