



Lister Community School

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Friday, 28th June 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are well.

I am writing to you about social media, mobile phones, and the impact on young people. Social media has become an integral part of our children's lives, offering both opportunities and challenges. It provides a platform for communication, creativity, and connection with others. However, it also presents risks, such as exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and loss of privacy.

This year we have seen a number of incidents in which pupils have used social media in a harmful way - recording and filming others without their consent, posting images on social media platforms that are often unkind and, on occasion, illegal. There have been cases where students have created group-chats, at home or outside school, which cyberbully their peers and lead to face to face conflict in school. One in five pupils nationally has been bullied online. In addition, inappropriate use of mobile phones - such as calling a parent during the school day rather than telling a teacher about a problem - is unhelpful. It makes the parent anxious and does not help the school respond quickly or support the pupil. It can also lead to over-dependency by pupils on parents.

This behaviour is against our school code of conduct, to be kind, polite and considerate. The school takes any inappropriate behaviour using social media very seriously. **I am writing to ask for your help and support, and to explain a major planned change to how we manage mobile phones in school next year.**

At school, students have assemblies, workshops and lessons about safe and appropriate use of social media. We also have a mobile phone policy that is appendix three of our behaviour policy, attached here: [Behaviour Policy](#). We currently expect pupils to keep mobile phones switched off and in their bags. Pupils often disregard this and keep them in their pockets. Some argue when they are confiscated. At all times, the presence of a mobile phone that is on distracts pupils' attention and makes them less 'present'. Pupils who are addicted to their phones often find themselves doing less well in school. Some pupils come in tired because they have been using phones far into the night, making them tired and not ready for learning.

I am therefore planning that, from September, there should be a total ban on mobile phones for pupils on the school site. This means at any point within the school gates and in the immediate surroundings - pupils should be at least 100m from the school before they switch their phones on.

What would this mean?

1. **Any phone seen for any reason during the school day will be confiscated and kept in a locked safe. It will be released to the pupil's family by the headteacher on the last day of the half-term, or the next half-term if the period is less than two weeks. There will be no exceptions to this rule.**

2. **Pupils who make use of mobile phones, or whose mobile phones disrupt learning during the school day, will receive a fixed term suspension as a minimum sanction, and this will be reflected in the new behaviour policy.**
3. We do not plan to check bags for mobile phones. **However, the school will not take responsibility for any mobile phone or digital device lost during the school day, nor will we help pupils to look for or recover them.**
4. If there is an exceptional reason, such as safeguarding, why a child needs a phone, daily storage can be arranged by arrangement with the headteacher. However, these cases will be rare, as pupils may use student reception to make necessary phone calls.

How can parents help?

As parents, it's important that you are also actively involved in your child's social media usage and talk to them about the ban on mobile phones. I encourage you to have open and honest conversations with your children about the responsible and safe use of social media. To ensure their safety and well-being you should set clear guidelines and boundaries, monitor their online activity and be aware of the platforms they are using. Many parents are choosing to avoid buying their children smartphones and devices that are digitally enabled until they are at least 14 when they will be more aware of how to use social media safely and appropriately. Additionally, being a good role model as an adult by demonstrating positive online behaviour and healthy tech habits can greatly influence our children's attitudes toward social media.

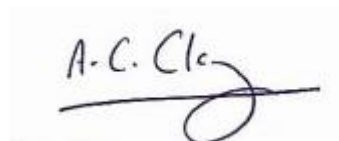
We will run workshops about this in the new school year for adults.

I am happy to receive comments on this suggestion via heads.pa@lister.ncltrust.net , and will consider any responses I receive before July 10th. I will also be discussing this matter with the Student Parliament.

I will be writing to you next week about the arrangements for the end of the term and the start of the new academic year.

I hope you will all have a restful weekend.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A.C. Clay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Alice Clay
Headteacher