

Rationale

Mobile phone and smartwatch use has been a topic of debate in schools and other care settings for a considerable period of time. In recent years, Wellington School has taken the approach of guiding pupils to use smartphones responsibly as these devices are an important part of daily life for most people.

However, there is growing evidence of the benefits of providing an educational environment which is largely free from the distraction of smartphones and smartwatches, and we believe that this is the correct approach for Wellington School. This decision has been taken following serious consideration of key factors, including:

- Research highlighting the addictive nature of smartphones and the impact this has on the ability of children and young people to focus on academic tasks (King's College London, 2019; Glass & Kang, 2019; Felisoni & Godoi, 2018).
- Research outlining the link between smartphone and social media use and increased levels of stress, anxiety and depression (UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, 2023).
- Safeguarding concerns about the content that pupils can access on their smartphones during the school day.
- The increasing number of pastoral and social issues related to improper use of smartphones. Many of these issues can have long-term consequences for individuals.
- The right of all members of the school community to enjoy working in a safe and trusting environment without the threat or fear of being photographed or filmed without their consent.

Our Approach

- From 8.50 am onwards, pupils in S1-S6 should have their phones switched off completely and out of sight when they are inside school buildings, including classrooms, the assembly hall, corridors, the dining hall and internal queuing area for the dining hall. Pupils should not use phones when moving between lessons throughout the day. Pupils are not permitted to use ear buds or air pods to listen to music inside school buildings or when moving between lessons.
- Pupils will only be allowed to access their phones during break and lunchtime in outdoor spaces. However, pupils may access their devices in a classroom if they are using this space when wet weather rules apply.
- Pupils will not be permitted to use smartwatches in school.
- S6 pupils will be permitted to use their phones during study periods and in designated areas of the school reserved for S6 only (common room and S6 working areas). S6 pupils will be expected to follow the 'no phones' rule in all other indoor public areas of the school, including classrooms, corridors, the dining hall, and when carrying out duties.
- Phones will not be permitted on school transport within the school day (such as sport buses and transport to Doonside or other facilities).
- Pupils attending extra-curricular activities should ensure that their phones remain switched off and kept in their school bag or blazer pocket.
- Pupils will be permitted to carry and use their phones on the journey both to and from school.

Junior School and P7 Pupils

- The long-standing approach in the Junior School of not allowing phones or smartwatches in school will continue to be observed.
- P7 pupils are permitted to bring their phones to school at the discretion of their parents. However,



phones will be handed in each morning during form time at 8.50 am and will be returned to pupils at the end of the school day.

- The same rules as for S1-S6 pupils may be introduced to P7 over the summer term to enable a smooth transition to S1, at the discretion of senior members of staff.

Examinations

- Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones or smartwatches in an examination room, whether it be end of year S1-3 examinations, prelim examinations or SQA examinations. Further specific instructions will be communicated by the team of invigilators and the Assistant Head (Academic) in relation to specific diets of examinations, in line with SQA rules and regulations where appropriate.
- If pupils do bring mobile phones or other devices with them on the day of an examination, they must place them at the front of the exam room in a designated area, and ensure their devices have been switched off, as directed by the invigilator or member of teaching staff supervising the room.

Practical Arrangements and Considerations

- Parents should contact the Junior School or Senior School office as appropriate if they need to pass on a message to their child(ren) during the school day.
- The School will communicate any essential information through Groupcall/Expressions and Heja. School staff will also contact parents by phone if required.
- If a pupil feels unwell at any stage throughout the school day, the established procedure should be followed. Pupils should report to the school office where assistance will be provided. Parents or a designated emergency contact will then be contacted by the School if appropriate.
- If pupils request to use the toilet during a lesson, they will be asked to leave their phone on the teacher's desk whilst they are out of the room.

Exemptions

- Pupils who use their phones for essential medical or wellbeing reasons, such as monitoring and testing blood sugar levels, will retain their mobile phone for this purpose only. A list of pupils in this category will be made known to staff by the Assistant Head (Pastoral).
- There may be rare occasions where mobile phone use is appropriate for specific curricular tasks for a limited period of time. Heads of Department should contact a member of the Senior Management Team to discuss proposed use of mobile phones by pupils in advance of the relevant lesson(s). Phones will only be permitted if Chromebooks cannot perform a similar function.

Trips

- Arrangements for the use of mobile phones or smartwatches by pupils on trips will depend on both the duration and nature of the trip. Specific instructions will be issued by the trip leader responsible for each trip.
- The trip leader will carry a trip mobile phone to contact parents and carers or the school in the event of an emergency.

Sanctions

- Pupils found using a mobile phone (looking at phone, texting, checking messages, generally using the internet etc.) at any other time apart from break and lunchtime will have their phone immediately confiscated until the end of the school day by the member of staff. Pupils found using a smart watch will have their phone confiscated until the end of the school day to prevent further use.
- Phones will be stored securely in the School office. No member of staff (nor the School itself) can be held responsible for damage incurred to phones whilst in school. Any device is brought to school at



the pupils' own risk.

- If a pupil has their phone confiscated, parents will be notified via email.
- Confiscated phones can be collected from the school office at 3.50 pm. A member of the Senior Management Team will be on duty to oversee this.
- If a device is confiscated by a member of staff during lesson 6 (after 2.55 pm) and storing the device in the school office is not practicable, the device will be retained by the member of staff until the end of the school day. The confiscation will then be recorded centrally by the office staff.
- Any pupil who refuses to hand in their phone to a member of staff when requested will be removed from class by a Head of Year or Deputy Head. Continued refusal to hand in a phone will result in parents being asked to come and collect the phone and pupil.
- Repeated breaking of the mobile phone rule will result in an escalation of sanctions by the appropriate Year Head, Head of the Junior School or Deputy Head as appropriate.
- As a school, we can only deal with phone related or social media related issues that take place in school or which are directly linked to school.

A McDougall
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