



STRANRAER ACADEMY

MOBILE PHONE POLICY INFORMATION SHEET



FROM:

3 June 2024

APPLIES TO:

All Pupils

SCHOOL CONTACT:

Your Child's Pupil Support Teacher

KEY PRINCIPLES

Mobile Phones or Smart Watches should not be used, seen or heard in classes unless with express permission from teachers for educational purposes

CONSEQUENCES

Phones or Watches being used inappropriately will be confiscated and held safely in the school office until a Parent/Carer can collect them or arranges their return in exceptional circumstances

RATIONALE – LEARNING AND WELLBEING

There is growing evidence of the potentially harmful effects of mobile phones on pupils. A recent study suggests teenagers receive an average of 237 notifications per day. The distraction and stress of this number of alerts must impact learning and wellbeing. These harmful effects seem to particularly affect girls.

A recent study found minimising phone use in schools led to increased attainment and a 29% decrease in psychological symptoms in girls.

RATIONALE – BULLYING

Every incident of bullying or conflict at Stranraer Academy in recent years has been conducted primarily through GroupChats and/or Snapchat.

This can include the taking and sharing of photos of other pupils and in extreme cases arranging fights.

A recent study found minimising phone use in schools led to a 43% decrease in bullying.

RATIONALE – THE POSITIVES

Phones are an essential part of the modern world. They can support healthy friendships and pastimes.

Young people having phones before and after school allows for communication with home – meaning parents know their children have arrived home or at school safely.

Phones provide access to powerful tools, which can support all pupils and particularly those with individual learning or medical needs.

STRANRAER ACADEMY'S APPROACH

A growing number of schools are introducing complete mobile phone bans. Given the positives outlined above, we do not feel this is the appropriate approach. We trust our pupils to manage their phone use in partnership with us and believe our approach will develop responsible and healthy habits.

As always, we can manage exceptions on an individual basis; if your child monitors blood sugar with their phone for example.

Almost all our pupils will follow this new guidance without incident – indeed, our Pupil Council overwhelmingly supports this approach.

TOP TIPS

- Social media should not be used by children under 13 years old
- Turn OFF Social Media notifications – especially on Smart Watches

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- Support for our Approach (or stricter)
- Parents – 73%
 - Parent Council – 88%
 - Teachers – 100%
 - Pupils – Pupil Council approved

- Actively monitor your child's phone to ensure their conduct and safety
- Phones must be stored in bags or pockets

FAQS

When can my child use their phone?

Before and After School - During Break and Lunch

Phones should only be used in class with express permission and for educational reasons. Your child's teacher will clearly instruct pupils to use their phones and for what purpose.

Phones should not be used while moving in between classes. Corridors are busy and pupils should pay full attention to moving safely.

What is not allowed and what will happen?

Your child's phone should not disrupt their or others' concentration in any way.

Phones should be switched off or set up, so they don't 'ping', flash or vibrate.

Any phone used, seen or heard will be confiscated by the class teacher and sent to the school office for safe keeping, to be collected by a Parent / Carer.

What will happen if my child refuses to hand over their phone?

Stranraer Academy is a safe and respectful school. Our pupils understand that any reasonable request by an adult should be cooperated with.

Given the high profile of this change in culture, Senior School Leaders, including the Headteacher will intervene promptly with any pupil failing to cooperate.

What will happen if my child has their phone removed repeatedly?

This is a serious concern. We will invite Parents/Carers to a Child's Meeting and make separate arrangements e.g., phones being kept at home or handed to a member of staff at the start of each day.

What if my child receives a message while their phone is being used for classwork?

We recommend that notifications for SnapChat etc. are turned off – If a pupil is using their phone inappropriately, it will be confiscated, to be collected by a Parent/Carer.

I am unable to collect my child's phone, but they need it that evening or to get home safely, what can I do?

Please contact the school to discuss with your Child's Pupil Support Teacher, Head of Year or Headteacher. In exceptional circumstances we will always try to be supportive.

What if they go to the toilet?

Time in class is important. Pupils should feel able to visit the toilet when they need but to do so responsibly. Pupils will be asked to leave their phone with teachers while they visit the toilet, to minimise distraction or the incentive to visit the toilet unnecessarily.

Will my child be allowed on their phone for social reasons by teachers?

No. Any short periods of 'downtime' – at the end of a lesson for example – can be used for face-to-face interaction but not phone use.

How should I contact my child during school hours?

Through the school office. Please do not call your child directly during lessons. The school office is always available, and we can contact any class in the school in an emergency.

THANK YOU

We appreciate this is a big change. We are convinced this approach will make our school safer, happier and more successful while establishing healthy life-long habits with a new and powerful technology.

Thank you in advance for your support and for the cooperation of your children while they are at school. It is appreciated.

Mr. Farquhar
Headteacher