

4th May 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

Over the last year we have all seen amazing uses of technology across our school and learning community. The use of Microsoft Teams and video conferencing have been invaluable. However, particularly since half term, I have become increasingly concerned about the use of, and reliance on, mobile phones by our students.

This is an issue nationally which has been much publicised in the news over recent months, in fact you may even be aware that the Minister for Education has recently called for a ban on mobile phones in school.

Our policy is simple; **students are not be permitted to use mobile phones for any purpose whatsoever whilst in the school, from 9am to 3.10pm.** This includes making calls, texting, using the internet, taking photos/videos, and checking the time. Mobile phones must be switched off (not on silent mode), and out of view of all fellow students and staff at all times. This also applies to iWatches and any other electronic devices or web enabled sources of information.

A real focus for us as a school has been to ensure the very best climate for learning in order that students are fully prepared for lessons and any distraction is eliminated.

Mobile phone use within school has a detrimental effect on both the learning in classrooms, and the socialisation of our students in school. Students who need to contact their parents, or parents who need to contact their children, should do so through the office. **Those students who are visibly seen with, or are using, a mobile phone in school within these times will have the phone confiscated until the end of the day, when they will be able to collect it from the reception.**

To ensure that the policy is clear, we have included the way in which the policy is implemented below:

1. Mobile phones should be **'off and away'** at all times. Any phone seen or heard will be confiscated; this includes phones on display in shirt pockets.
2. Phones that are confiscated will be returned to students at the end of the day in the first instance. Although, should there be a repeated occurrence, a call will be made home with the requirement for a parent / carer to collect the phone on their child's behalf.
3. The restriction is in place at all times while students are in the grounds of the school building.

We would ask that you further discuss this with your child in order to reinforce the positive benefits of a school day free from mobile phones and social media. If your child has their phone confiscated, please support the school and explain the reasons for our policy.



Longton Hall Road, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent. ST3 2NJ
Tel: 01782 882900 | Email: office@stmca.org.uk | www.stmca.org.uk | @StThomasMoreCA
Headteacher: Mr M Rayner BA(Hons) NPQH

I am more and more concerned about reports linking the use of social media by young people, with poor mental health. We continue to educate our students about staying safe online, however social media is a genuine threat to this as we simply cannot control it.

Our school needs to remain a safe space where children can be children, where young people can talk, laugh and socialise face to face rather than via a device, and where any issues - either online or outside of school - can be left at the school gate.

Thank you for your continued support

Yours sincerely

Mr M Rayner
Headteacher

