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19th September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are well, and your child is enjoying the start of the new school year.

Over the past week, you may have seen some news relating to Ormiston Academies Trust's approach to mobile phones in schools. I am writing today to share some further information on this and to clarify OIEA's current position:

- **Mobile phones are not to be seen or heard in the academy. Students should switch them off and place them in their bag or coat, out of sight, until they leave school.**
- **Mobile phones that are seen or heard are confiscated with parents having to come and collect from reception at their earliest convenience.**
- **Students who refuse to hand over their phones are placed in isolation and issued a detention. These students are then not allowed their phone in school moving forwards.**

As you will no doubt be aware, mobile phones are increasingly being used by students both at school and at home. However, a significant amount of research, including guidance from the Department for Education, clearly shows the negative impact this can have on student learning, behaviour, and wellbeing.

We wholeheartedly agree with the trust's approach and believe phones in schools are an increasingly negative influence. At OIEA, we adopt an evidence informed approach and engage with the research to support the decisions we make, I have therefore taken the liberty of providing a brief summary of key research linked to the use of mobile phones in schools.

- *Children aged 13-18 spend nearly 8.5 hours using devices (Rideout et al, 2022)*

- *35% of 13–14-year-olds and 52% of 15–17-year-olds say they are online 'constantly' (PEW Research Centre, 2022).*

- *A study (Kuznekoff and Titsworth, 2013) investigating the impact (during a class lecture) on student learning found that Students who were not using their mobile phones wrote down 62% more information in their notes, took more detailed notes, were able to recall more detailed information from the lecture, and scored a full letter grade and a half higher on a multiple-choice test than those students who were actively using their mobile phones.*

- A study (Liu et al, 2020) based on survey and academic data from more than 11,000 students in China found that pupils who used a mobile phone for ≥ 2 hours/day on weekdays and ≥ 5 hours/day on weekends were significantly more likely to report poor overall academic performance and scored significantly lower on Mathematics and English achievement tests.

- A study from Brazil (Felisoni and Godoi, 2018) found that, for every 100 min spent using a device (per day), a pupil dropped 6.3 points in the school's ranking of pupils. When phone usage took place during class time only (as opposed to during free time and weekends), the effect was almost twice as high. The authors describe the magnitude of the effect found as 'alarming', providing evidence of the 'potential harm of excessive smartphone use'.

- Results from another study (Tanil and Yong, 2020) corroborate the finding that simply the presence of a smartphone can negatively affect memory and recall.

- A study (Beland and Murphy, 2015) which surveyed schools in four English cities (Birmingham, Leicester, London and Manchester) found that 'student performance in high stakes exams significantly increases post ban'. Specifically, introducing a mobile phone ban in schools increased students' GCSE scores.

I hope the information provided helps to convince parents that our policy is a sensible one. Moving forwards, we may wish to further strengthen our approach but there are no confirmed plans to do so at the moment.

As always, we thank you for your understanding, support and cooperation.

Mr S Leach



Principal