



Chew Valley School

Learn Grow Achieve

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Dear Parent/Carer,

Use of Mobile Phones in School

A real focus for us as a school has been to ensure the very best climate for learning so that students are fully prepared for lessons and any distraction is eliminated. To support this, you may be aware that Chew Valley took the decision some time ago not to allow the use of mobile phones within school by students in Years 7 to 11 because of the negative effect on student learning. Whilst we very much understand that there are benefits of being able to communicate quickly with each other, we feel that as a school we want them to be concentrating on their studies and continuing to build friendships by speaking to each other face to face.

Our experience is that mobile phones are increasingly involved in creating confrontation and anxiety between students. The situation is further complicated by some students seeing it as their "right" to have constant use of a device. In the UK, more than 90% of teenagers own a mobile phone. The prevalence of these devices poses a challenge for schools and in many cases attitudes towards their use have hardened as they have become more ubiquitous. In a survey conducted in 2001, no schools banned mobile phones. By 2007, this had risen to 50% and by 2012 some 98% of schools either did not allow mobile phones on school premises or required them to be handed in at the beginning of the day. Within this context could I reiterate our policy to you:

- If mobile phones are with students they should be **'off and away'** during our school day; any phone seen or heard will be confiscated.
- The restriction is in place at all times while students are in the grounds of the school building from the start of the day as they arrive up to 3.35pm. We are fully aware that students may wish to catch up with messages from home at the end of the day and, so long as they are out of the buildings towards the front of the school, this is acceptable.
- If there is an emergency, then a parent/carer can contact the school office and we will make sure that any message gets through. If a student needs to contact home then again by visiting reception we are able to support them in contacting you.

Our policy has not changed, but how we deal with this has altered slightly and this has been agreed through our school governing body:

- On the first occasion when a mobile phone is seen, it will be confiscated from the student in question and then returned by collection from the school office at the end of that day.
- On subsequent occasions, the phone will be kept for seven days. Currently, students are given an after school detention for using their phone. This sanction will be changed, with the length of the removal of the phone being the deterrent.

Before confirming this, we have spoken to a good number of other secondary schools about how they have gone about managing phones and our policy highlighted above is very much in line with theirs. If I could ask you to support us then we can focus on learning and enabling our students to build positive friendships. I have spent time speaking to all students about this in recent assemblies.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Beynon
Headteacher