



*Headteacher* Mr Geoff Bartrum

Main Road

Longfield

Kent DA3 7PW

Tel No: 01474 705377

Fax No: 01474 709842

Website: [www.rowhill.kent.sch.uk](http://www.rowhill.kent.sch.uk)

## Changes to Mobile Phone Policy in Schools

22-7-2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you know Rowhill School has had a clear and consistent policy on mobile phone usage for a long time. Our students are allowed to bring their phones to school but in the Primary phase of the school and the Transition hub they are handed in at the door on arrival or to their Class Teacher. In the Vocational hub and the ACP department they can keep their phones on them, but not use them during learning time.

Currently we have students in all phases of the school who do not follow these mobile phone rules and get them out in lessons, during assemblies, pupils often leave their class to be on their phone and have used them in lesson time to contact each other. When pupils are challenged regarding the inappropriate use of their phones this has led to confrontation, threats and aggression from pupils towards staff. There have also been safeguarding concerns that have arisen due to inappropriate use of phones in school.

As you may have seen in the news, in February the Department of Education issued new guidance to all schools in England that called for mobile phones to be banned for the entire time students are in school.

This guidance can be accessed via the link below:-

[Mobile phones in schools - February 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The Department for Education has given schools four routes to choose from:

1. No mobile phones on the school premises.
2. Mobile phones handed in on arrival.
3. Mobile phones kept in a secure location, which the student cannot access throughout the school day.
4. Never used, seen or heard.

Rowhill School has gone for options 2 and 3. We are therefore advocating that from September 2024 our school adopts the principle that all mobile phones are to be handed in on arrival, kept in a secure location, which the student cannot access throughout the school day.

If students were to be seen with their phones during the school day they will be asked to hand the phone in and it will be confiscated for the rest of the day. The phone would be kept secure in the school until a parent/carer was able to come and collect it. If a student refuses to hand in their phone to staff then they will be asked to be collected by their parents/carer. If pupils continue to not follow the mobile phone rule, then a meeting with parents will be needed and the consequences outlined. Consequences will range from suspension from school, additional education around why we have the mobile phone rule or being educated offsite.

I know that many people would argue that we should not allow mobile phones on the school premises at all, and whilst I do understand the logic behind this approach, I believe it is important that students who travel long distances in their taxis have their phones on them for their journey. There are a small number of students who need to use their phone for medical reasons (such as those who monitor their blood sugar levels via an app), and I would like to reassure parents/carers that we would of course make reasonable adaptations to the policy in such circumstances.

We will be discussing this change with our students through a number of assemblies and tutor sessions. We will be explaining to them the reasons *why* the Department for Education has made this change, which includes:

- Reducing the risk of mobile phones unnecessarily causing distraction and disruption.
- The ambition to make all schools in England a safe space where students are protected from the risks and dangers associated with some social media.
- Reducing safeguarding concerns that are caused by pupils using their phones in school.
- Reducing the peer pressure and possible stigma associated with owning what are often expensive devices.
- Ensuring all young people spend more time staying active and socialising face to face with their peers, and in activities which have a positive impact on their wellbeing.

Thank you so much in advance for your ongoing support. I know that a small number of students will struggle with these changes but I believe that any issues will be quickly resolved if we work together to explain to them the longer-term benefits of reduced screen time on their wellbeing.

As always thanks for your support in this matter.

Mr G Bartrum

Head Teacher

Rowhill School