



23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019

Dear Parents / Carers

## Mobile Phones

We are writing to inform you about some changes to our mobile phone policy. Whilst we entirely understand that many parents want their child to carry a mobile phone for the purposes of remaining in contact outside of school hours, we are increasingly concerned about the impact of mobile phones, especially as a consequence of the inappropriate use of social media, on students' mental health and readiness to learn. From 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019, we will develop our *On Site, Out of Sight* rule by requiring all students to turn their phones off before they enter the site each morning and keep their phones switched off until they leave the school site at the end of the school day. If a student has an after-school activity or is revising in the library after school then they will be able to use their phones to contact home when they need to be collected. We will be taking a zero tolerance approach and if any student's phone is seen or heard, then it will be confiscated and kept in the school's safe for 5 school days, after which time a student will be permitted to collect their mobile phone themselves from Student Services at the end of the day. Should any of the 5-day confiscation period fall within a holiday then a student will be allowed to collect their phone one hour after the end of school on the last day of the half-term or term. If any students' mobile phone is seen and they refuse to hand it to a member of staff, our normal procedures for defiance will apply. The new rules and procedures will also apply to headphones.

We have decided to amend our mobile phone policy for several reasons. Firstly, we want to remove the temptation for students to check their mobile phones. Students often feel compelled to check their phones for messages or posts, especially when they have heard/felt an alert, and if they know that their phone, and that of their peers, is switched off, it will reduce this distraction, allowing students to focus more fully on learning. Secondly, the inappropriate use of social media communications (sometimes during the school day) can often lead to arguments or students becoming very upset. And thirdly, we are concerned about the excessive use of mobile phones and social media on students' wellbeing and mental health. By ensuring that during the school day students have switched off their mobile phones, they can avoid all social media for a few hours. We hope this will reduce some of the pressures social media places upon our students and they can focus better on their learning.

These changes will not affect a parent or carer's ability to contact their child in an emergency or for any student to contact home, if necessary. As before, should any parent or carer need to contact their child with an urgent message, you can contact Reception and should any student need to contact home, then they can visit Student Services or their home College outside of lesson time and call home. We will require your support to ensure this change is effective and we ask that you please reinforce this message with your child at home.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Osborne

Assistant Principal: College Headteacher Aquila College



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Yours sincerely

Mr Thomas Beecham  
Assistant Principal, Headteacher, Orion College



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Yours sincerely

Mr Lee Harkness

Assistant Principal: College Headteacher Pegasus College



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Yours sincerely

Mr J Vass

Assistant Principal: College Headteacher Phoenix College