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Mrs J Mohamed
Headteacher

Our ref: PMC-JRI 220817
Your ref:

Dear Parent/Carer,

New Mobile Phone Policy

Following consultation with parents, pupils, teachers and non-teaching staff, the following policy regarding the acceptable use of mobile phones in Oldmachar Academy will be adopted from Tuesday 22 August 2017.

While mobile phones provide parents and pupils with reassurance and a sense of safety, and can be useful for pupils to help record homework deadlines, or conduct independent research, there are growing concerns that their unchecked use has a negative impact on young people's learning.

There is a considerable body of evidence linking mobile phone use with anxiety and a range of other mental health issues which are becoming increasingly common among young people in Scotland. As advances in mobile phone technology continue and young people live out more and more aspects of their lives in a digital realm, schools have a responsibility to encourage a healthy balance in mobile phone use. This responsibility is increased in the light of concerns from employers about the negative effects of excessive phone use on productivity in the workplace among young workers. Our acceptable use policy is designed to strike a balance between allowing young people access to technology, while also allowing them freedom to learn without distraction.

- **Pupils will continue to be allowed to bring a phone to school.** This is in response to parental concerns about pupil safety, is in line with Scottish government advice and will also allow mobile phones to be used in classrooms when deemed appropriate by teachers.
- At NO point can phones be used for unauthorised photographing or recording of any pupil, school visitor or member of staff. **Any pupil who photographs someone without permission can expect their phone to be confiscated immediately.**
- There will be red zones in the school – indicated by clear signs – where phones should **not** be used. These red zones **include the corridors** which provide access to the main teaching areas of the school. This is to prevent pupils being photographed or recorded without permission as they move from class to class and is also to ensure that pupils arrive at class ready to begin work, rather than being distracted by phones in between lessons.

- There will also be phone zones in the school – in social areas such as the canteen, where pupils will be free to use phones for socialising and entertainment. Even here, however, the rule about any unauthorised photographing or recording still applies. Phone zones are clearly indicated by signs.
- In classrooms, teachers will display a red, amber or green sign to let pupils know how the teacher wants phones to be used in their lesson. This decision is for the teacher, based on their professional judgement of what is appropriate for their lesson.
 - Red – phones not appropriate for this lesson
 - Amber – phones allowed when directed by teacher, e.g. for Google Classroom
 - Green – pupils allowed to listen to music as they work, for example
- Pupils who do not follow the new guidelines should be warned their phone will be confiscated.
- If a warning is ignored, the phone will be confiscated and placed in the SMT office where it will be secure and parents will be informed. Phones taken from pupils need to be stored securely as they are (a) expensive (b) hold private information which should be protected. Parents need to be informed so they know their son/daughter will not be contactable by phone – any important messages can be sent to the school office or SMT.
- Any young person whose phone use repeatedly breaches this acceptable use policy will be interviewed by SMT and parents will be contacted. In extreme cases (hopefully rare) parents may be called to school and the right of that young person to have a mobile phone during the school day will be withdrawn temporarily.

These guidelines were designed in consultation with parents, pupils, non-teaching staff and teachers. Pupils had the opportunity to comment on the draft guidelines and a group of pupil representatives discussed the guidelines with the school management team. The guidelines take account of Scottish government advice. A draft version was approved unanimously by a group of parents on Mon 19th June 2017, at a meeting to which all parents had been invited.

Your support is much appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Mr P McCabe
Depute Headteacher