

July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

From September 2020, Goodwin Academy will operate as a mobile-free zone between the hours of 8am and 3.30pm. This means that students will not be allowed to use their mobile phones, or any other personal electronic devices including earphones, at all on school premises, including at break times and lunch times. Smart watches will be permitted, but only for students to tell the time.

This is a measure that has been introduced successfully by many schools across the country, including secondary schools in our district and has been widely reported as having a positive effect on the well-being, social skills, academic performance and behaviour of students. Locally, I have been told that parents have noticed and appreciated the benefits of this policy and have been very supportive.

We are increasingly concerned that students, by using their phones constantly, are:

- displaying worrying addictive/attachment behaviour to their phones;
- are increasingly distracted as they fret about when they will receive the next communication;
- are susceptible to harm through cyber-bullying;
- are damaging their own social development through over-reliance on their phones rather than simply conversing with their friends.

By taking this stance, we are giving the students respite from their electronic devices which we hope will have numerous benefits, in particular the development of student's social skills.

In essence, students must not be seen with mobile phones at all anywhere on the school premises. Their mobile phones should also not be heard and if evidence of mobile phone activity on school premises emerges, the students will be sanctioned. We do understand, however, that many parents would like to know that their son/daughter have access to a phone during travel to and from school in case of an emergency situation. Therefore, students are permitted to have their phones in their bags, out of sight, and turned off whilst on school premises. If your child should need to contact you whilst they are at school, they should report to their year group's Wellbeing Centre or Main Reception.

If a student breaches the above rules they will have their phone confiscated immediately and it will be returned at the end of the day. For students, who continue to breach this rule, they will have their phone confiscated for a period of 24 hours after which time their parents are invited to collect it. In these cases, we will not return phones directly to students unless we have a written request to do so from the student's parent. Students who refuse to hand over their phones can expect to be withdrawn from their usual lessons as a consequence of their defiance.

You could help us to implement this new policy smoothly by:

- discussing this policy with your son/daughter and helping them to understand the positive reasons behind it;
- not calling or texting your son or daughter during the school day on their mobile phones, but contacting them via the Main Reception;
- ensuring that your son or daughter brings an appropriately sized school bag every day that is large enough to safely accommodate not only their school equipment, but their mobile phone (if they continue to bring one to school) all day;
- helping to minimise problems by ensuring that your son or daughter understands clearly that, if they do not wish to have their phone confiscated, they must accept that they should not have it switched on or visible at all on the school premises.

Phones can be used on school trips if staff have agreed this beforehand and Sixth Form students may use mobile phones in the Sixth Form Common Room.

Students will be reminded of Goodwin becoming a mobile free zone during assemblies in September. I hope you will see the benefit of this policy and will support the school in this matter. I really do believe that this will make a positive difference on so many levels and have spoken personally to many Headteachers who can testify that this has worked exceptionally well in their schools.

Thank you, in advance, for your ongoing support.

I hope you and your family are safe and well and I wish you a happy summer break.

Yours faithfully,



Mr S Smith  
**Principal**