

30th March 2017

The Meridian School
Garden Walk
Royston
Hertfordshire
SG8 7JH

MERIDIAN
SCHOOL

t: 01763 242236
f: 01763 245749
e: office.meridian@rsat.org.uk
www.meridian.herts.sch.uk

Head: Kim Horner BA (Hons), MEd (Acting)

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PASSIONATE
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Dear Parent/Carer of students in Yrs. 9,10 and 11.

Technology in School

At Meridian School we are dedicated to ensuring that every young person can learn without any distractions. We have increased the presence of senior leaders throughout the school to ensure lessons are purposeful, and we have tightened up the school's sanctions ladder to ensure the rare instances of poor behaviour that disrupt learning are dealt with and are not repeated.

Eliminating distractions means that I have consulted with staff about the banning of mobile phones during the school day. The response has confirmed that mobile phones do cause significant distractions, including this term:

- in classrooms ringing/ pinging/ vibrating
- in corridors causing students to be late
- in causing arguments due to social media
- discreetly listening to music or equivalent when not permitted
- issues regarding the safe keeping of phones

While these are not regular occurrences, we do not want staff to worry about dealing with these issues. We want all staff and students to focus on teaching and learning.

Recent research from the London School of Economics indicates that schools that have a 'hard' ban on mobile phones see their results rise by 6% on average. Since these results are one measure of our students' life chances, we have to take this seriously.

We are also responsible for ensuring that students do not access inappropriate websites in school. Our school filtering system does this very effectively on the school computers. Unfortunately, it cannot block mobile phones and web access.

As a result of all these issues, from **Wednesday 19th April 2017**, students will no longer be allowed to bring mobile phones or electronic devices to school. This update will bring our mobile phone policy in line with the expectations in other schools.

We will enforce this rule – if a student is seen to have a mobile phone, electronic device or headphones visible at school (at any time of the school day including break, lunch and after-school) then this item will be immediately confiscated by a staff member. Students will be asked politely to place the offending item on the desk (if seen in/near a classroom) or escorted to the front office to hand in a phone seen elsewhere on the school site.

Phones will be kept in a secure location until the end of the following school day, when the item can be collected by a **parent/carer** between 15:30 – 15:50. If the same offence occurs for a second time it will result in a longer period of confiscation, initially for a period of one week.

If during the day you have an urgent message for your child that needs to reach them before the end of the school day, please call the school office on 01763 242236. Should students need to contact home as a matter of urgency, they should contact Reception staff who will be happy to allow them to make a telephone call from the office free of charge.

We realise that a few parents may want their child to have a mobile phone in case of emergencies on the way to and from school. If you choose to allow your child to have a phone for this purpose, it is in the agreement that phones should be kept safely **out of sight and switched off at all times during the school day and on school premises**. If you choose to allow your child to have a device for this purpose the school accepts no liability for loss, theft or damage.

Wearable technology, such as the Samsung or Apple watch work with a mobile device and as such are **not permitted to be worn at school in any circumstances**. This includes all technology worn on the wrist that has mobile phone/data connectivity. These items can also be extremely valuable and should be kept safe at home during the school day. If your child owns one of these devices, please can you ensure that they do not bring them to school.

Technology at home

We recognise that technology can be helpful in the completion of homework tasks and study outside of school and that the majority of students use it well to support their studies.

However, our mentoring process has also highlighted two key issues with the use of technology at home.

- 1) That technology can cause distractions at home, particularly through the use of social media on mobile phones. Removing phones from students to a different room during their study time is an effective way to form good habits for concentrating on one task for a prolonged period of time.
- 2) Several students have mentioned to staff members that they are staying up late whilst in bed, playing on their phones when they should be sleeping. Our recommendation is that mobile phones are not used for alarm clocks and are left in a different area of the house overnight, to help students to get their recommended length of sleep.

GCSE exams – Summer 2017

For parents of Year 11 students, an additional important notice about exam regulations for the exams beginning in May. It is also not permitted for students to have wearable devices in examinations. The JCQ regulations specifically mention them as banned alongside mobile phones, which cannot be with the student in the exam rooms.

Students will be required to place all watches on the desk in front of them during an examination to ensure that they are not a banned device. Mobile phones are not permitted to be on the student in examinations (even if turned off in a pocket) and any mobiles in the exam room must be handed in to a tray at the start of the exam to be retained by the invigilators and collected afterwards.

Yours sincerely



Zoe Andrews
Assistant Headteacher