



William Brookes School

COUBERTIN SCHOOL
PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE
MATHS & COMPUTING COLLEGE

January 2019

Dear parents/carers,

It is regularly reported by the media about mobile phones in school. Recent studies have shown that there is a direct correlation between the amount of time spent on social media and mental health issues. This is highlighted by the number of cases of depression in teenaged girls, but the number is rising in boys too. France has gone for a national ban of mobile phones in school, Ofsted has made it clear that they have no place in the learning process and many people realise that young people need a break from social media and electronic devices. As a rural school, we know that, for some students, a mobile phone is an important part of staying safe in the periods before and after school. For many students, it would be sensible to leave their phone at home. There is no need for them to be used during the school day. As a consequence, from **Monday, 14 January**, students will be banned from using or carrying a mobile phone between the 08.45 hour warning bell at the start of the school day and 15.15 hours. Phones must be kept in the bottom of school bags, switched off and safely stored in lockers. Phones will be confiscated from students found with or using them during the school day and left with Reception staff where they may be collected at the end of the day. Students who are repeat offenders will be banned from bringing their phones into school altogether and refusal to follow the rules will invoke our usual graduated punishment.

This year we have dealt with several social media related incidents, including fights, that are the consequence of inconsiderate or unpleasant comments from the confines of a bedroom. I will not tolerate fighting in school and we consistently exclude students for this behaviour as it has no part in a modern civilised society. All students know about the support services in school, but we would ask that you/your child/ren please let a member of staff know of any issues as soon as they arise rather than try to deal with it your/themselves. Many sites have age limits that students do not adhere to and I would ask all parents to take a greater interest in the on-line activity of your children. From national studies, it is estimated that 75% of young people are bullied on-line but this is rising year on year. The best way to ensure your children are safe is to monitor, limit usage and use the limiting functions that are available from internet providers. On **Wednesday, 16 January from 17.30 hours**, parents are invited to join us for a workshop here in school which offers tips and guidance on how to better control online activity at home.

As ever, we hope that the new year has started well for you and look forward to seeing you at the many events we have planned over the next term. The school's production of "Hairspray" is the first of these occasions, running from Monday, 14 to Thursday, 17 January.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Renwick
Head

Catherine Conner
Chair of Governors



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