

New rule on mobile phones and internet devices

Advice for parents and carers

(Version 1)

The Cherwell
School



A Centre of Opportunity

June 2017

What is the new rule?

Students to have their phones (and related devices that connect to the internet) switched off and in their bags throughout the school day (i.e. from the moment they arrive on the school site until the time they leave).

Students will not be allowed to access their phones (and related devices that connect to the internet) at break, lunchtime or in-between lessons as has been the case up until now.

What happens if students break this rule?

They will get a C3 (in the same way they would for having their phone out in a lesson)

Why is there a new rule?

There are a number of reasons for this change of approach but two stand out:

1. Safeguarding

Access to smart phones and mobile data now means that it is virtually impossible to restrict what students are able to access via the internet whilst in school. This has the potential to lead to safeguarding risks where students could be exposed to age inappropriate, illegal or offensive material. There is also an increased possibility that bullying may take place online within the school day.

2. Student Wellbeing

We are concerned that some students are simply spending too much time on their phones and this does give rise to concerns in relation to their wider wellbeing. Specifically with regard to their face to face communication skills and the fact that research has shown that young people who are overly attached to their mobile devices do up to 20% worse academically than other students.

When will the rule come in to effect?

Monday 12th June

How can parents and carers support their children to adjust to this new rule?

Make sure your child has everything they need for school and that they know what arrangements have been made for after school (extra-curricular, route home, pick up point etc)

Remind them of the new rule every morning – phones (and related devices that connect to the internet) must be off and in bags from the moment that they arrive on school site until the time they leave.

Continue conversations about internet safety and cyber bullying and how the main reason for this rule is to keep them safe. Encourage them to report anything inappropriate that happens online

Suggest alternative activities for them to do at break and lunchtimes – perhaps they could bring a pocket size game they can play with their friends. As a school we are looking at best ways to expand the range of lunchtime activities available at school

Reassure them that if they really need to contact you they can always go to the Year Leaders office to call home

If you need to contact them, please do so via the Deputy Year Leader

General advice on internet safety and use of mobile data

As well as being safe in school we are equally concerned about the safety of our youngsters when they are away from us. We will continue to educate them through Social Wellbeing lessons and assemblies on the importance of staying safe whilst enjoying the internet as well as conducting themselves with integrity.

There is useful advice for parents and carers on our website:

cherwell.oxon.sch.uk/safeguarding/e-safety

Student Questions

Q. What if I need to contact my parents?

Go to your Year Leaders Office and they will let you use your phone there for things like making last minute arrangements for after school or asking them to bring forgotten equipment or homework. We do hope that as you get older you will be able to organise yourselves so that this only happen once in a while. If you feel unwell you should go to the medical room and they will contact home for you if necessary.

Q. What if I like to listen to music at break and lunch?

We would much prefer that you socialised with your friends, but if you really want to listen to music you need to bring an iPod or MP3 player without internet connectivity and be sitting down somewhere rather than walking around the school.

Q. What if I need to know the time?

Buy a watch or look at one of the clocks - there is one in every classroom as well as in the canteen and reception.

Q. What if my timetable is on my phone?

You will need to get a paper one and stick it in your Planner. Please see your Deputy Year Leader if you need a new paper copy.

Q. What if I need to use my phone as a calculator?

Calculators are part of your equipment so you should always carry one. Therefore you will not need to use your phone as a calculator.

Q. What if my parents and carers need to contact me?

Your parents will leave a message on your phone that you will find when you turn it on. If your parents need to contact you urgently they will contact your Deputy Year Leader who will get a message to you.

Q. What if I go over to North Site for lessons?

The rules remain exactly the same. Phones are switched off and in bags.