

16<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear parents/carers,

## Re: school update before half term

I am writing to you following the strangest six weeks I think Phoenix has ever known! Even though we currently live in such uncertainty, what is clear is the importance that school life has in shaping the lives of our young people. Seeing those genuine smiles again on the gate in a morning, seeing friendships cemented in the playground, and also (even though they probably won't admit it) seeing how much students have missed learning in the classroom, has been heart-warming and worth all of the countless hours it has taken to get the school back up and running. I am pleased to say that the tough decisions that were made in July have paid off as despite having over ten cases of Covid confirmed since our return in September we have been able to minimise the number of students impacted requiring self-isolation because of the clear protocols that are in place.

It is important though that as we have slowly increased the offer for our students, they ensure that they follow the guidelines and protocols in place. We still have around twenty students per day arriving at school without masks. Could I please remind parents/carers that if their child has been given a replacement mask, the invoice through ParentPay is paid as school cannot sustain these costs.

Our staggered starts and ends to the school day are working well, however, a number of parents/carers parking to collect/drop off their children are creating dangers for other students and road users. We ask that no parents / carers use Gordon Avenue, Marsh Lane or Clarks Lane opposite the school. We have contacted the highways agency, Sandwell Local Authority and West Midlands Police regarding the poor parking. The Sandwell camera car was around school on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October recording illegal and dangerous parking and is anticipated over the coming term to enforce and fine those parking dangerously. As a school we will also be recording any witnessed. Only together can we ensure we have a safe environment for our children.

We have learnt a great deal over the past 9 months and it has allowed us to reflect on what it means when we talk about our 'Phoenix Culture' which is a term we use frequently within the school community. We pride ourselves in growing confident young adults, and modelling what we expect in our students every day. Alongside this, we also pride ourselves in our extremely high expectations and high standards and this is reflected in the work they produce within the classroom.

I appreciate that for many this has been a very anxious time and that physically getting back into the school routine has been a challenge. However, as I have mentioned previously, good habits in the basics and high standards and expectations lead to good outcomes, so I do need to draw your attention to a number of things that we must address. Firstly in relation to school uniform and PE kit. So far we have taken the stance that if students have PE on a given day they should

wear their PE kit for that day. However recently we have had a number of students push the boundaries of what is acceptable. Could I please ask for your support in ensuring they are wearing the correct PE Kit, which is the black and red Phoenix t-shirt, black tracksuit trousers and the Phoenix tracksuit top. Students must wear their blazer to school every day including on the days they have PE. This is for them to wear when not doing PE.

We have also seen a rise in student using their mobile phones in school. As a school we have signed up to be a 'Phone-Free School' where if a student's mobile phone is seen or heard during the school day it is confiscated. Please see below a copy of the school mobile phone policy for your perusal. Note that a Parent Agreement Form will be sent home for you to complete next half term. Please reiterate the rules on mobile phones with your child.

Could I also encourage parents/carers to support their child in preparing their school bags the night before with everything they will need for the following day. Wherever possible we are trying to avoid extra people coming into reception, but we are still seeing a significant number of parents/carers bringing in items their child has forgotten. A child taking responsibility to be organised and prepared for the following day is a skill learnt for later in life.

Covid has certainly made it difficult for us to meet regularly however to overcome this issue we have brought in an online system for parents' consultation evenings this year. This means for parents' evening you will be able to book all the relevant slots to speak to your child's teachers via a video call. There is no app needed as all can be done through your internet browser on your phones. Our first parents' evening takes place on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October with our Year 7, 10 and 12 settling in evening – *for details on how to attend appointments over video call, please visit our school's website ('Y7, Y10 & Y12 settling in evening' tab).*

Following a period where we have been reconnecting with our students since lock down we are now very much in our repair phase. This is where we are working with our students to repair on their lost learning throughout lockdown. Year 11 are progressing very well with their early starts and period 6 interventions. I have been really proud of their attitudes to learning during the first half term. As we now enter their very important Mock examination period their focus now is on recalling the knowledge they have built over the last 17 months. We heard very recently that both GCSE and A'level examinations will continue in 2021 though they will now start three weeks later than usual. Three weeks will not fully recover the 14 weeks lost through lockdown, however, if they continue to engage and work with their teachers we will do everything we can to ensure they are in the best position possible next June.

To support Year 10 with their build up to their GCSE examinations, Year 10 students will start their revision programme after October half term. The expectation of students is to produce and memorise 7 flashcards per fortnight that they will get tested on in tutor time. The flashcards will be provided to the students from the school and students will be supported with different techniques on how to use them effectively. The students will then be graded as below and sent as a text message to parents/carers on fortnightly basis to monitor how they are getting on.

Revision Score	Statement
1	You have worked exceptionally well with your revision. Well done! (above the minimum amount made).
2	You are working hard with your revision. Well done! (minimum 7 quality flashcards made)
3	You are falling behind with your revision
4	You are failing to engage with your revision
5	You are not attending form in the morning
X	This student is currently self isolating

With all the additional financial burdens that Covid has presented us with it was great to receive a bit of good news regarding funds this week. Our Combined Cadets Force team bid early this year to have a climbing wall facility built in our Sports block. We have been successful with this bid and therefore hope to have this additional resource available to our students very soon.

Finally as part of our anti-bullying strategy, we have recently installed a new reporting system for all of our students which is easily accessible through our website. The benefits are:

- Students can report any issues, in confidence, to a member of staff who will then follow it up
- Staff will be aware if an issue arises and act upon this information quickly
- Students can feel confident that they can report an issue without being seen speaking to a staff member
- Parents/carers can also use this system if they are concerned and wish to speak to a member of staff in confidence.

The link will take the student/parent to our reporting form. This will also be in the 'favourites' bar when students access the internet in school. Questions are provided to prompt the student/parent to be able to write down all the required information. This email will then go to a designated staff member, Mrs Wilde Assistant Head teacher who will follow it up and take any necessary action. Please look out for further information around anti-bullying during November when we have our annual 'National anti-bullying week'.

We are always humbled and appreciative of the support our parents/carers give in helping us to maintain such high standards within the school by having those, sometimes, difficult conversations at home, and this goes a long way to helping us shape our Phoenix Culture. Every day this is currently a big challenge. When you consider for example we are meeting and greeting students on their staggered arrival every day managing 3 breaks and 3 lunches and seeing them off at the end of the day, you can appreciate the difficulties and challenges we face on a daily basis. Your continued support with upholding our standards and expectancies at this time is much appreciated and is helping us to continue to shape and mould the good confident, future young adults we want to see.

I hope you and the family have a great half-term break when it arrives later this month.

Yours faithfully,



Mike Smith  
Head teacher

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## Mobile Phone Policy

Issued by/responsible person: Charlotte Wilde - AHT	Issue No: 2	Review frequency: Every year
Policy number (to be provided by C. Motard): NS36A	Approval's date: 14/09/20	Review Date: September 2021
Approval requirement: Senior Leadership Team		

## Justification

Evidence has shown that the use of mobile phones around school by students disrupts learning and has been used as a source of bullying. Their inappropriate use affects students' progress and is an ongoing safeguarding concern.

The schools behaviour policy states that mobile phones "should not be turned on or visible throughout the school day, at any time. If this is found to be the case they will be confiscated."

To address the school's concerns around learning and safeguarding, the policy regarding the use of mobile phones (below) has been updated early this academic year to address the use of phones on site and the high number of repeat one-day confiscations, as well as securing the support of parents and carers.

Parents/carers will be informed of this change by letter as well as the information being readily available on our website: <https://www.aspirebelievesucceed.com>

The policy outlines an escalation in the sanction applied should a phone be confiscated due to a student repeatedly breaking the school rule as follows:

- On the first occasion students will be able to collect their phone from the school office at 3pm on the same day.
- On the second occasion the phone will only be returned to the student's parent/carer. The phone can be collected from the school reception between 3pm and 4pm the same day.
- Students whose phone is confiscated for a third time in a year, must arrange for parents to collect it between 3pm and 4pm from the school reception, seven days (**five** full school days) after it was originally removed. E.g. A phone confiscated on a Thursday will be returned at 3pm on the following Thursday.
- The length of confiscation of a student's mobile phone due to a fourth incident will be at the discretion of the Head teacher.

The policy also states that, "If a student is found with the mobile phone of another student, its use will be recorded against both parties..."

A letter will be sent to parents/carers informing all parties of the update. In the letter, parents/carers will find a form to sign and date. The form outlines that parents and carers agree to support the school with the mobile phone policy and any sanctions for inappropriate use. If the form is not signed and returned, it is on the understanding that the child will not bring a mobile phone onto the school site.

We fully understand that parents/carers will need to contact their children urgently on occasions. Urgent calls between students and parents/carers should be via the school landline system or students may use their own phone with the permission and in the presence of a member of staff.

## The Law

### Education and Inspections Act 2006

#### Section 89 – Determination by head teacher of behaviour policy

- (1) The Head teacher of a relevant school must determine measures to be taken with a view to –
- (a) promoting, among pupils, self-discipline and proper regard for authority,
  - (b) encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils,
  - (c) securing that the standard of behaviour of pupils is acceptable,

- (d) securing that pupils complete any tasks reasonably assigned to them in connection with their education, and
- (e) otherwise regulating the conduct of pupils.

(6) The measures determined by the head teacher under subsection (1) must be publicised by him in the form of a written document as follows –

- (a) he must make the measures generally known within the school and to parents of registered pupils at the school,

### **Section 91 Enforcement of disciplinary penalties: general**

(1) This section applies in relation to a disciplinary penalty imposed on a pupil by any school at which education is provided for him, other than a penalty which consists of exclusion.

(2) The imposition of the disciplinary penalty is lawful if the following three conditions are satisfied.

(3) The first condition is that the imposition of the penalty on the pupil –

- (a) is not in breach of any statutory requirement or prohibition, and
- (b) is reasonable in all circumstances.

(4) The second condition is that the decision to impose the penalty on the pupil was made –

- (a) by any paid member of the staff of the school, except in circumstances where the head teacher has determined that the member of staff is not permitted to impose the penalty on the pupil, or
- (b) by any other member of the staff of the school, in circumstances where the head teacher has authorised the member of the staff to impose the penalty on the pupil and it was reasonable for the head teacher to do so.

(5) The third condition is that the decision to impose the penalty was made, and any action taken on behalf of the school to implement the decision was taken –

- (a) on the premises of the school, or
- (b) elsewhere at a time when the pupil was under the lawful control or charge of a member of staff of the school.

In addition, [Section 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) states that where a teacher disciplines a pupil by confiscating an item, neither the teacher nor the school will be liable for any loss or damage to that item. Equally, there is no statutory liability on schools for items that go missing in other ways.

### **Guidance to Schools**

#### **Behaviour and Discipline in Schools – January 2016**

Page 11 section 35 (1)

#### **Confiscation of inappropriate items. What the law allows:**

35. There are two sets of legal provisions which enable school staff to confiscate items from pupils:

1) The **general power to discipline** (as described in the bullets under the heading “Discipline in Schools – Teachers’ Powers” on pages 3 and 4) enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil’s property as a punishment, so long as it is reasonable in the circumstances.

#### **Discipline in Schools – Teachers powers**

Pages 3 and 4

#### **Key points**

- Teachers have statutory authority to discipline pupils whose behaviour is unacceptable, who break the school rules or who fail to follow a reasonable instruction (Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).
- The power also applies to all paid staff (unless the head teacher says otherwise) with responsibility for pupils, such as teaching assistants.

- Teachers can discipline pupils at any time the pupil is in school or elsewhere under the charge of a teacher, including on school visits.
- Teachers can also discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside school.
- Teachers have a specific legal power to impose detention outside school hours.
- Teachers can confiscate pupils' property.

On a number of occasions parents/carers have suggested that the confiscation of their child's phone amounts to theft. In law a person is guilty of theft if s/he 'dishonestly appropriates property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it'. This is clearly not the case when the school is applying the behaviour policy.

To support this policy further, the school has signed up to the '**Phone-Free School**' National scheme. For further information, please visit:

<https://parentsandteachers.org.uk/the-phone-free-school-campaign-an-open-letter/>



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