

February 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Mobile phones and other electronic devices

We wrote in September to remind parents and carers about our student code of conduct for the use of mobile phones at the Academy. Our position on this is simple and straightforward:

Students are not allowed to use their mobile phone or other electronic devices at any time, or anywhere within the Academy building and wider site.

Unfortunately, the use of mobile phones and ear pods has become a growing problem during the year. Even though the rules are clear, the number of students failing to follow them is increasing and this is causing issues in lessons and at social times, despite us providing regular reminders about this matter to young people during assemblies, lessons and at social times.

As stated in September, an increasing number of schools are moving to a system that involves pupils handing in their phones at the start of the day and then collecting them as they leave school at the end of the day. We would seek to avoid having to implement this at Appleton Academy at all costs, but we need to work together to address this issue and this requires your support, as well as the cooperation of your child.

I am sure you have seen in the national press this week that the government has issued new guidance to schools around the use of mobile phones and electronic devices. They are suggesting there is a need for a much firmer stance due to safeguarding issues and the distraction they cause to learning. We intend to address this issue in school so that we do not need to implement a total ban on phones, or their collection at the doors on a morning.

Our expectation has always been that young people leave their phone in their pocket or bag all day, keeping it on silent or powered off. If they do not do so, their phone will be confiscated and can only be collected at the end of the day by a parent. This policy is continuing and if your child's phone is confiscated you will receive a text from the Academy informing you of the confiscation and asking you to collect it. We will not hand confiscated phones back to students. Please do not challenge staff who follow our rules by adhering to this policy, which has actually now been in place for over ten years. Indeed, please support the Academy by speaking to your child about these rules and the consequences of their use of a mobile phone in school.

There are a growing number of students who have now had their phone confiscated on several occasions and this also cannot continue. Therefore, with immediate effect, those young people with more than one mobile phone confiscation will be expected to hand their phone in each day to a member of pastoral staff and they will be able to collect this at the end of the school day. This measure will be in place until the end of the academic year.



We will be rigorously enforcing our expectations around the use of mobile phones and electronic devices during the remainder of this academic year and we are asking you to support this. All too often parents call their child or accept a call from their child during the school day, which is not helpful. Please do not contact your child on their phone during school hours; it is totally unnecessary, as you can use the contact details on our website if you need school to pass a message to your child. If you take a call from your child, or call them during school hours, this adds to the problem and may mean that children face additional sanctions due to taking these calls. In the event of parents and carers being contacted in an emergency, this call would always be made by a member of staff from the Academy number.

I would like to thank you in advance for your support in this matter. If you would like to read our longstanding student code of conduct for the use of mobile phones, this can be found in the Behaviour for Learning Policy on our website.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Garlick".

Rachel Garlick
Head of Secondary