

Policy Statement on Cell Phones in the Middle School

Rationale:

We understand that cell phones are commonplace in today's society. We are also aware from our own research and through the recent cell phone survey conducted within the Middle School that there is a strong mandate to instigate firm boundaries around the use of cell phones during the school day. It is our responsibility to ensure that technology is an enabler and not a detractor within the school setting. The following policy has been developed with our students' wellbeing at the forefront of our decision making. We know that students are often distracted by their cell phone, drawing their attention away from their classwork tasks or face to face communication they may be engaged in with their peers or teachers both inside and outside of the classroom. We also know that some students feel unsafe or vulnerable when other students have cell phones out during the school day. Removing the temptation to use cell phones during class and break times allows all students the opportunity remain focused, stay active and engage positively with their peers.

Purpose:

The purpose of the policy is to set out clear guidelines for students, staff and parents regarding the possession and use of cell phones at Scots College Middle School. It is intended that these guidelines will allow students to feel secure at school, interact positively with their peers in a face to face manner, and enable staff to teach without the distraction that cell phones invariably bring into the learning environment.

Guidelines and Procedures:

- Scots College Middle School students are permitted to bring their cell phone to school provided it is turned off (completely) and stored securely in their locker between the following hours:
 - Year 7&8: 8.30am - 3.30pm
 - Year 9&10: 8.45am - 3.30pm.
- It is essential that each student is responsible for purchasing and using an appropriately secure and strong combination/key lock.
- If a parent/caregiver needs to contact their child during the school day to deliver an important message, they are welcome to phone the main college reception and a message will be delivered to the student. This must be done before 3.00pm to ensure the student can be contacted before 3.30pm.
- If a student is found with their phone out between the hours as listed above, they will be asked to hand it over by a member of staff. The staff member will record the student's name and take the phone to the Middle School Office where it is the student's responsibility to collect this at 3.30pm.
- **Students will have a '3-strike' system as follows:**

Strike 1: The student is asked by a member of staff to hand over their phone¹. It is then brought to the Middle School office by a member of staff where it will be securely stored until 3.30pm. A Behaviour Note will be recorded on PC Schools and parents will be notified via an automatic email via PC School Behaviour Notes. The student can collect their cell phone at 3.30pm.

¹ If a student refuses to hand over their phone, the staff member must seek support from a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the student continues to refuse, then parents are to be contacted and a meeting arranged.



Strike 2: As per strike 1 plus a follow up email to parents is to be sent by the relevant Dean. This email will contain a reminder of the cell phone policy and the consequences should there be a third strike.

Strike 3: As per strike 1 plus a follow up email to parents to be sent by a member of the Middle School Leadership Team. In this email a meeting will be called between the Middle School Leadership Team member, the relevant House Dean, the parent and the student. The purpose of the meeting will be to develop a formal agreement regarding the student's cell phone use. Following the meeting, a copy of the agreement together with a formal letter outlining the key terms of the agreement and a warning about the possible consequences of continual disobedience will be sent home.

Exceptions:

- Students who use their cell phone for medical reasons (e.g. diabetics to check blood sugar levels) will be allowed special dispensation but will still be expected to follow the rules listed above outside of using their phones for their wellbeing.
- Some staff may request that students with a phone use it for a lesson for such functions as filming or voice recording – in this instance staff are to ensure that phones are switched off and stored away safely in lockers before the end of the lesson.

Review Date:

Annually.

Reporting Requirements:

Middle School Principal will report to the Board as appropriate.

Advisory Group:

Prepared by: MS Senior Leadership Team; to be reviewed by PCC