



14 July 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

### **Mobile phones and headphones in school**

Maiden Erlegh School in Reading has always had a clear approach regarding mobile phones and headphones; phones should not be used in our school and headphones should be put away.

Primarily, we insist on this because students do not need to use a phone in school. They are not required or necessary in lessons and, during break and lunchtimes, we want students to learn to communicate with their friends and peers face to face, not through a phone. Additionally, mobile phones are increasingly valuable devices and, if used in school, could easily be broken, lost or even stolen.

We also know that allowing phones to be used in school introduces greater opportunity for the negative aspects of social media (including online bullying, taking pictures without consent etc.)

Whilst we understand that parents may wish their child to bring a mobile phone to school for safety and for ease of contact, we have been very clear that it should be turned off and put away before they enter the school building and not switched back on or taken out until they leave the school building at the end of the school day. Please note if a mobile phone is brought into school, it is at your own risk.

As we approach the start of a new school year, we want to re-establish our high expectations in this area with a new process for dealing with mobile phone infringements.

- Students will be reminded that phones and/or headphones should be turned off and "out of sight" (either in their locker/blazer pocket/bag) as soon as they enter the school building;
- If a student has their phone and/or headphones out, then they will have these items confiscated by a senior member of staff\*;
- The phone and/or headphones will be held in a plastic bag at student services until the end of the day;
- The student may then collect their phone and/or headphones from student services at the end of the school day. The school will not enter into any discussion about the condition of the items as they are brought into school at the student's own risk;
- After the third mobile phone and/or headphones infringement, parents will be contacted to pick up the items instead of the student. (in this case, the phone and/or headphones will be held securely by the school until parents are able to do so).

\*If a student refuses to hand over their phone, it will be considered an incident of defiance and will be dealt with accordingly as per our behaviour policy.

There is no new rule here, merely the introduction of a clearer process for ensuring that the rule we have is adhered to and is implemented.

This year, we have found that a number of students have used their phone to check their timetable on the Class Charts student app. Whilst we encourage students to engage with the school through their Class Charts app (for communications, homework notifications, house points etc.), it is not necessary for students to use the app during the school day. In September

we will be providing all students with a small school planner that they will be able to carry around with them which can carry their timetable information. Similarly, it is not necessary for students to use their phone to know the time. There are clocks around the school and students may wear a wrist watch.

I am asking all parents to support this clear process. If parents, for whatever reason, feel that they cannot do this, then I would advise that their child does not bring a mobile phone and/or headphones into school.

Finally, I would also like to remind parents that they should not contact their child on their mobile phone whilst they are in school. If you have an urgent message that you need to communicate with your child that cannot wait until the end of the school day, you should contact the school office.

Thank you for your ongoing support in this and other matters.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr A Johnson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Mr A Johnson**  
Headteacher