

## **Mobile Phone Free School**

### **FAQs for Parents and Carers**

#### **Why has OBA introduced a phone free policy?**

We have two main objectives:

- A) To improve the mental health of our young people
- B) To ensure a calm and orderly, disruption-free environment is maintained.

There is a significant amount of national and international research that suggests there is a clear link between the mental health and the use of mobile phones. Our students' mental health is really important to us, and we are passionate about doing all that we can to support this.

There is also a range of research in place that suggests that learning and attention in the classroom is disrupted by the distraction of mobile phones. By removing this distraction, we believe that our students will benefit greatly, both inside and outside the classroom.

#### **During what parts of the school day will the new policy apply?**

OBA will be phone-free throughout the entire school day, from the moment students arrive at morning registration, until they leave the academy building at the end of the day, including during lunchtime.

#### **Can my child bring a mobile phone to school at all?**

Yes, students can bring their phones for safety and travel reasons. However, they will be securely stored during the school day as part of the mobile phone-free policy.

#### **How will the school manage students' mobile phones?**

At the start of the day, all students' mobile phones will be collected during morning registration and placed into a secure, locked box. Each student will be allocated a numbered compartment for their phone. The box will be securely stored during the day, and students will collect their phones from the same box during registration at the end of the day.

#### **Afternoon registration has been mentioned, how will this work?**

We plan on making slight changes to the internal structure of the day to create a ten-minute afternoon registration which will begin at 2.50pm and end at 3.00pm. Break and lunch times will both finish 5 minutes earlier to provide the 10 minutes required for an afternoon registration.

#### **What happens if a student is caught using their phone during school hours?**

If a student is using their phone during the school day, it will be confiscated, and Parents/Carers will need to come to the academy to collect the mobile phone, it will not be returned to the student. If a child fails to hand their phone to a member of staff, this will be dealt with in line with the academy behaviour policy.

#### **How will I contact my child in case of an emergency?**

In case of an emergency, you can contact the school office, and they will ensure the message is passed to your child promptly. The school will also contact you if there is an urgent need, in line with the robust safeguarding and safety processes we already have in place. We have also spent considerable time training our administrative staff over recent months to ensure we can be as efficient and effective as possible.

### **What if my child needs to contact me during the school day?**

If a student needs to contact you, they can do so via the school office, their Form Tutor, Head of Year or member of the Senior Leadership Team. We already do this on a daily basis when a student informs us that they need to make contact with home.

### **How will this policy impact my child's social interactions?**

The policy encourages face-to-face interaction among students, particularly during lunchtime. It helps foster better communication skills and reduces reliance on technology for socialising.

### **Are there exceptions for special events or school activities?**

Exceptions may be made for field trips or other school activities where phones are necessary for safeguarding reasons. In such cases, the school will inform students and parents in advance. This is an area that will be carefully considered before each event.

### **How will the school ensure that the policy is enforced?**

Staff members will monitor student behaviour throughout the day, ensuring that phones are collected and securely stored. Regular reminders will be provided during registration sessions and assemblies. Staff will also receive training before the policy is implemented on how to support and monitor students effectively.

### **How can I support the school in implementing this policy?**

You can support the policy by encouraging your child to follow the rules, discussing the importance of the policy with them, and only contacting them through the school reception in the case of emergency. If your child is caught with their phone in school, it will be confiscated, and you will need to come to the academy to collect it. It will not be returned to the student; we will need your support with this.

### **Will my child's mobile phone be safe in school?**

Phones will be stored in a purpose-built secure phone box, which will be locked and stored in a secure room. Only key staff will have access to this room throughout the day. Students will not have access to this room. Your child will be the only person who will physically touch the phone when they put it in and collect it from their phone box.

### **What is the school's policy on smart watches?**

In the initial phase, we are going to ask for phones to be turned off so smart watches cannot connect to their phone, however, smart watches may still be worn. If any student is seen using their smart watch inappropriately, it will be confiscated. We will review this after the first half term and update our policy if we feel it is needed.

### **What happens if I need to collect my child during the school day, will they be able to get access to their mobile phone?**

Yes, a member of staff will take them to retrieve their phone before collection. In order to ensure that this happens, all collections must be pre-arranged with the school. If your child is unwell during the school day, a member of staff must give them permission to go home, and that member of staff will make arrangements for their phone to be collected. If your child has a pre-booked appointment, reception should be informed on the morning of the appointment so that arrangements can be made for your child to be collected from lesson, retrieve their phone, and wait in reception.

### **Will staff be able to use their mobile phones?**

Staff will use their mobile phones for emails, to take the registers or for internal communication within the academy. Staff are clear on the expectations of the academy and are fully aware of the importance of their role in the process.

**Will the behaviour policy change?**

Yes – we will update our behaviour policy to ensure the mobile phone system is carefully built into it. We will share an updated version of the policy on our website shortly.

If you have any unanswered questions, please contact the school reception on 01928 711643 who will organise an appointment for you to speak with a member of our Senior Leadership Team on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December.