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Headteacher: Mr Christopher Heyes

To All Parents and Carers

24 June 2019

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am extremely pleased to be able to write to you and introduce myself as the new Headteacher of St Anne's Church of England Academy. Over the past few weeks I have been lucky enough to spend some time at the Academy before I took up post. I would like to thank all the staff and students for making these days a real pleasure.

Over these days I have gained a good understanding of what needs to be done in order that we provide the best education possible for your child. Our core business is learning and I have had the opportunity to visit many classrooms in my short time here. It is great to see the learning that is taking place in lessons, but we understand that we can be even better. Due to this there are some changes that I have made immediately in order that we deliver the best education. One of the changes that I want to communicate to you is the use of mobile phones in the Academy.

Mobile phones have changed the way students interact with the world and, if used effectively, they can be a powerful educational device. However, we believe that there are more useful ways we can harness technology. Mobile phones can be extremely disruptive to the social and academic development of students. The addictive nature of some games, social media and apps can cause damage to the mental health of young people and cause safeguarding breaches. These interruptions can happen both in lessons where students find it difficult to concentrate if they have a mobile phone on them and outside lessons where mobile communication is replacing face-to-face communication.

It is for these reasons that we have decided to ban the use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices in the Academy from Monday 24 June 2019. This means that **students must not be seen with mobile phones from the moment they enter the Academy building in the morning to the time they leave the building after 2.40pm, including both break and lunchtime.** If a student is seen with a mobile phone during these times, a staff member will confiscate it and hand it to Reception where it can be collected by a parent or nominated adult. Students must be aware that refusing to comply with this request will lead to the involvement of the senior leadership team and to internal, or a fixed term, exclusion. **When a mobile phone is confiscated, we will only return it to a parent or nominated adult acting on behalf of the parent, not to the student.**

For students who have a phone confiscated more than three times in a term, a meeting with parents / carers will be arranged and the student will be expected to leave the phone at home for the remainder of the term or hand in the phone at 8.30am every morning. Students who fail to meet this condition will have their phone confiscated for the remainder of the half term.

Students should be aware that wearing headphones will be seen as equivalent to using a mobile phone. Students with headphones will have their headphones confiscated along with their mobile phone. This will also apply to other personal electronic devices, such as iPads, etc.

I understand the concerns that parents will have around this and would like to answer some typical questions below.

### **1. What if parent / carers wish to contact their child?**

- The Academy is not banning students from having mobile phones. They can bring them to the Academy and can use them to contact parents before they enter the premises and when they leave at the end of the school day. In the case of an emergency, a parent / carer should call the Academy and we will pass the message on to their child.

### **2. What if I can't come to school to collect the device?**

- We understand that the confiscation of a mobile phone may be of an inconvenience to some parents / carers. This is why if you are unable to collect a confiscated phone we are happy to keep hold of it until you can arrange an appropriate time to do so. This is also why we ask that you support us and also speak to your child to ensure they do not breach this rule.

### **3. Doesn't this kind of technology actually help teaching and learning?**

- The Academy believes in the intelligent use of technology but, more importantly, we believe in equity. Not all students have access to smartphone technology and even those that do, do not always know how to use it responsibly. Whilst we will teach students about safe and responsible behaviour when using mobile technology, we will ensure that all work and homework is accessible to all students, no matter the technology they have access to at home.
- Research has shown that student performance in GCSE examinations improves following mobile phone restrictions in schools.

Whilst I understand that the confiscation of a mobile phone may cause inconvenience, it will benefit the outcomes of our students. We have made this policy clear to our students during our assemblies last week and we ask you to support us in this message.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Mr C Heyes  
Headteacher