



Ref: NCO/AHN/Mobile Phones

23rd May 2024

Dear Parents / Carers,

Firstly, I would like to thank all our parents for their patience and understanding around the unforeseen delays some of our students faced on yesterday's Reward Trips. We will always keep parents updated through our normal channels of communication if directly impacted by a situation involving their child. Despite the weather and unfortunate circumstances, a great day was had by all, our students showed great resilience.



As you are already aware, our policy on the use of mobile phones in school will change to reflect national guidance after the May half-term break. As with other standards and expectations, we rely on the support of parents to ensure the smooth running of the school. I have included a recent update for parents on school attendance that has been shared by the local authority.



Mobile Phones

What is changing?

Mobile telephones are not to be seen or used on the school site. All phones must be turned off and away before crossing the school threshold. They should remain in bags / pockets for the duration of the day and only used beyond the school gates.



Why are we making the change?

Many of our young people have learned to use their phones appropriately in schools, but not all. There is however mounting evidence that suggests time away from digital devices whilst in school will improve both learning and mental health. There are new national guidelines to support schools in making the change.



How will we manage the change?

Phones will be banned on the school site after the half term break. Initially we will issue reminders about not using phones in school and only confiscate devices following repeated defiance or for phone usage that has never been permitted such as making calls or using devices in lessons.



Before the end of June, we expect to have transitioned to a school site where students learn without mobile phones as a distraction. Consequences for those who do not follow the rule will be applied.

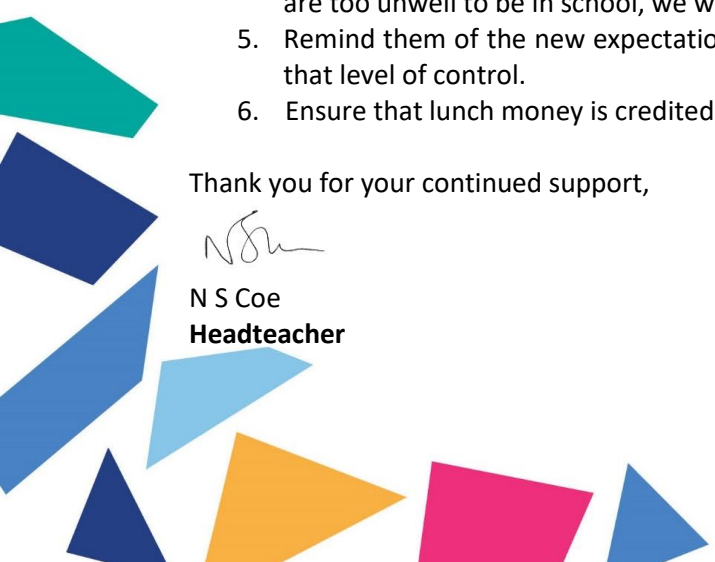
What can parents do to help?

1. Don't call or text your children during the school day, any pressing issues should be shared by calling the school.
2. Don't accept calls from your children during the school day.
3. Challenge messages sent to you from within the school grounds.
4. Trust us in "loco parentis" when your children need mild first aid or are feeling unwell. We adopt a bracing approach to school attendance and will support our students to remain in school. If they are too unwell to be in school, we will send them home.
5. Remind them of the new expectations / turn off their data from 8.40am until 3.10pm if you have that level of control.
6. Ensure that lunch money is credited regularly.



Thank you for your continued support,

N S Coe
Headteacher





Attendance Important Update – Changes to Education-related Penalty Notices

Information for Parents

You may be aware that the Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes will come into effect on 19 August 2024.



The changes to be aware of are:



- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period (1). This may include absences because of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.



Please see examples below for further clarification:

1. A penalty notice issued for any offence that begins prior to the 19 August will be issued under the existing rules. Therefore, it will (a) be charged at £60/£120, (b) not count towards the escalation whereby a second penalty notice within 3 years is charged at a flat rate of £160 and there is a limit of 2 penalty notices within 3 years and (c) will be issued in line with the LA thresholds for the 2023-24 academic year. This is regardless of whether the penalty notice is issued before or after the 19 August.

For example, if a parent takes a pupil out of school without authorised leave of absence in term time for 10 sessions or more in July 2024 but the penalty notice is not issued until September the old rules will be followed, including being charged at the old rates of £60/£120. The penalty notice will not count towards the escalation.

2. A penalty notice issued for any offence that begins after 19 August will be issued under the new rules. Therefore, it will be (a) charged at £80/£160, (b) count towards the escalation, and (c) be issued in line with the new national threshold of 10 sessions in 10 weeks.

For example, a parent takes a pupil out of school for 5 days in the first week of the new term at the beginning of September 2024, the new rules will be followed.

Any term time holidays that are taken after the start of the 2024/25 academic year will be treated under the new legislation as the new rules apply to any offences committed from 19 August 2024, regardless of when the holiday is booked.

(1) A school week is any week in which a school meets at least once

