

# WALTON HIGH SCHOOL



The Rise, Walton On The Hill, Stafford ST17 0LJ

Telephone: 01785 334 917 | Email: [office@walton.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@walton.staffs.sch.uk)

Website: [www.waltonstaffs.com](http://www.waltonstaffs.com)

**Headteacher:** Mr N D Finlay BA (Hons)

**Deputy Headteachers:** Mr B Fletcher BSc (Hons) MSc

Dr J Rowley PhD BSc (Hons)

PROUD TO BE A PART OF



October 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

At the end of the first half-term, I would like to say thank you to everyone for what has been a positive start to the new academic year. A real focus for us as a school has been to ensure the very best environment for learning so that students are fully prepared for lessons and any distraction is eliminated. To support this - and following extensive consultation - we have made the decision to ban the use of mobile phones within school because of the negative impact they have on learning. If a student chooses to bring their phone into school, it must be switched off and in their bags from the point of entry until they leave the school site. In our recent survey, 78% of parents backed the move, whilst 80% of the teaching staff were supportive of the ban.

This decision has not been taken lightly and has been based upon the significant increase of mobile phone related issues that we are having to tackle in school, many of which are to do with the misuse of social media platforms. Staff are finding it increasingly difficult to monitor the usage of devices. There is significant research which concludes that mobile phones have a negative impact on the mental health of many youngsters, and we firmly believe that a 7-hour daily break from their devices will be beneficial. Students have been informed in assemblies this week and will be given the opportunity to adjust to the new way of working after half term before full implementation in the week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020. After October half term, students will be reminded to put their phone away, although confiscations will not take place until the new year.

To ensure that the policy is clear, the school website is being updated to reflect how the policy will be implemented, although the basic principles are listed below:

- Mobile phones must be **'off and away'** at all times during the school day including at break and lunchtimes and must remain off whilst pupils are on the premises. Any phone seen or heard will be confiscated, this includes phones on display in shirt pockets.
- Phones that are confiscated will be returned to students at the end of the day in the first instance, although should there be a second occurrence a call will be made home with the requirement for a parent / carer to collect the phone on their child's behalf.
- This policy applies to all students, in Year 7 to 11.
- Sixth Form Students can use their mobile phone in the Sixth Form Centre only.
- The policy also applies to headphones, and connected devices such as Smart Watches and 'ear buds.'

During the transitional period, students undertaking Media Studies may be allowed to use their phone in class as coursework has already been started using personal devices. This will end at Christmas. In exceptional circumstances, some students with additional needs may be allowed to use their phone if, for example, there is a medical necessity.

May I also take this opportunity to remind parents that as an item prohibited in school as part of our Behaviour Policy, that the school takes no responsibility for any damage to, or loss of, a mobile phone at any point.

We would ask that you further discuss this with your child and thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully

**MR M J HOBBY**  
**ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER**