



“Success For All”

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22nd 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. Following our return, staff have used the first seven weeks to introduce and reiterate our expectations for the year ahead as well as making students aware of the new arrangements and requirements that NLC has put in place.

Students have been given time to learn their new timetables and become familiar with the pattern of their working week. I am particularly pleased with the positive response to the “After School Clubs, Rewards and Trips” which will further enhance the student enrichment programme and further support students in engaging with both the academic and pastoral side of school life.

A real focus for us as a school has been trying to ensure we have the very best climate for learning so that students are fully prepared for lessons and any distraction is eliminated. Our aim is to make the whole learning experience a safe and secure, nurturing environment where all students are happy and able to surpass their potential.

To support this we have made the decision to ban the use of mobile phones within school because of the negative effect on student learning, mental health and wellbeing.

This decision has not been taken lightly and we have done significant research into the topic to look at what the issues are. Students have been informed in Assembly and Tutor Time this week and have been given the opportunity to adjust to the new way of working this week with the policy being fully implemented from our return after October half term.

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 areas are listed below:-

1. Mobile phones should be ‘**off and away**’ at all times, any phone seen or heard will be confiscated;
2. Phones that are confiscated will be returned to students at the end of the day in the first instance, should there be a second occurrence a call will be made home with the requirement for a parent/carers to collect the phone on their child’s behalf.
3. The restriction is in place at all times while students are in the grounds of the school building, this includes when students arrive and leave at the end of the day. Phones should be away before students enter the school grounds and not accessed until they have left the site.
4. Should students wish to use their phone at the end of the day to contact parents with any concerns or for collection following school based activities they are asked to use the main reception area of the school where phones may be used during this time.

We would ask that you further discuss this with your child over the half term break and thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Michael Kent
Principal

Our research on the use of mobile phones in school

We have spent a great deal of time over the last few months examining the impact of the use of mobile phones in school. We have spoken to staff, students and parents and have looked at the latest research regarding their use in a school setting.

In the UK, more than 90% of teenagers own a mobile phone. The prevalence of these devices pose problems for Head Teachers and in many cases attitudes to their use has hardened as they have become more ubiquitous.

In a survey conducted in 2001, no schools banned mobile phones. By 2007, this had risen to 50% and by 2012 some 98% of schools either did not allow mobile phones on school premises or required them to be handed in at the beginning of the day.

Our experience at NLC is that mobile phones are increasingly involved in creating confrontation between staff and students in school and have also been very influential in inappropriate gatherings of students either before or after the school day. The situation is further complicated by many students and parents seeing it as their “right” to have constant use of a device.

As well as the obvious social disadvantages of phone use in school, recent research has cast doubt on their educational worth.

“Ill communication: The impact of mobile phones on student performance.” By Louis –Phillipe Beland and Richard Murphy found that after schools banned mobile phones, the test scores of 16 year old students improved by 6.4%. The economists reckon this is the “equivalent of adding five days to the school year.”

There is growing evidence that the internet and digital gadgets are making it harder for us to concentrate. The Pew research centre in America surveyed 2,500 teachers and found that they thought the internet had a “mostly positive” impact on student research; while 87% felt modern technologies were creating an “easily distracted generation with short attention spans.” The generation Y report felt that while young people are “undoubtedly capable of long periods of concentration” but those who spend a lot of time alone using technology” tend to have less in the way of communication skills, self-awareness and emotional intelligence.”

Anecdotally it has always been felt that mobile phones in classrooms can support student learning and in particular regarding research and note taking. However research suggests that students are unable to multitask and retain sufficient information to improve their test scores. In one study, students were asked to take notes during a lesson by using either pen and paper or mobile phones. The students who were not using mobile phones wrote down 62% more information in their notes, had more detailed notes and scored a full grade higher on a multiple choice test than the students who were actively using their mobile phones.