**Positive relationships: Mobile phone and social media policy**

*Dalkeith High School: Enabling all young people to succeed in an inclusive, respectful, and stimulating environment.*

*Determined. Happy. Successful.*

For the purposes of this policy, the term ‘mobile phone’ has been used to cover any call/text or internet enabled personal device.

**Rationale**

At Dalkeith High School, we value the opportunities afforded by mobile technology and social media. Used well, these can enhance both our learning and our relationships. However, research suggests that there are links between young people’s excessive or improper use of these and:

* Poorer sleep
* Depression, anxiety and stress.

We have also experienced first-hand the links between the use of social media and bullying behaviour.

Some schools have completely banned mobile phones from the school building. However, we believe that young people will learn more by understanding how to use them appropriately.

Mobile phones are often very expensive pieces of equipment and any young people who bring phones or other devices into school do so at their own risk. Those who choose to must do so in accordance with this school policy.

**Mobile phones in the class environment: Bag or box**

Pupils, teachers and parents have let us know that mobile phones can be a significant distraction. To this end, mobile phones should not be seen in class at all.

Young people are expected to get themselves ready for learning at the start of every lesson. Part of this is ensuring that their mobile phones are in their bags and on silent/do not disturb. They should also ensure that they do not have earphones/ear-pods.

Should a young person not have a schoolbag, each classroom teacher has been supplied with a clear plastic box in which the phone can be stored for the duration of the lesson.

If a young person fails to comply with the ‘bag or box’ request, the class teacher will treat this as a refusal of instruction and enact our *Positive Relationships: Classroom Expectations* policy, which can be found here:

<https://dalkeith.mgfl.net/positive-relationships-in-the-classroom/>

**Exceptional circumstances**

There may be infrequent occurrences where a mobile phone provides a useful learning tool e.g. to take photographs in Art, to create voice overs in Drama, or to access online tool such as Show my Homework. If this is the case, the classroom teacher will follow the following procedure:

* The class will start in the usual way, with mobile phones in bags or boxes
* The class teacher will explicitly state when the mobile phone can be used, how it should be used, and the duration it can be in use
* Learners will then be permitted to take out and use their mobile phones for the set period of time
* The devices should return to the ‘bag or box’ when the time is up

Class teachers will also ensure that young people who have elected not to bring their phones into school or to use them in the classroom will not be disadvantaged in the classroom.

**Social media in the school environment**

There are numerous social media sites that are popular with teenagers. Parents/carers should be aware of the age guidelines for these. The guidelines are in place for good reason and are based on a sound understanding of developmental needs.

Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok and YouTube all have age guidelines of 13+. The sites recommend that accounts be monitored by parents and carers, with TikTok and YouTube specifically stating that, given the likelihood of a young person accessing inappropriate content, under 18s should have parental consent to set up an account.

Whatsapp has an age guideline of 16+. This is a recent change and reflects concerns over the inability of younger teenagers to cope with the forum.

All young people are supported in their understanding of social media through the Personal and Social Education programme. However, this is a fast evolving area and families are advised that they keep up to date with sites that specialise in advice for parents such as:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/advice/social-media-apps>

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/social-media>

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-guides>

Dalkeith High School aims to create bullying-free culture, as can be seen in our anti-bullying policy:

<https://dalkeith.mgfl.net/anti-bullying-policy/>

Whilst we will support any young person who is struggling with relationships challenged by social media, parents/carers should be aware that we can only take formal disciplinary action where unacceptable conduct has occurred in school.

**Contacting young people during the school day**

Parents/carers are reminded that they should not expect any young people to respond to messages or calls during class time, as this has the potential to interrupt their own learning and that of others. In an emergency, young people can be contact via the school office. This is reflected in our Maximising Attendance Policy, available from:

<https://dalkeith.mgfl.net/maximising-attendance/>