



Portlethen Academy
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25th April 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

***IMPORTANT - MOBILE PHONE UPDATE**

You will have read in the media that many schools across Scotland and the United Kingdom are reviewing their mobile phone usage and policies to support with raising attainment, improvements in young people's engagement in education and learning, and in their mental wellbeing.

Our Portlethen Academy [Expectations of All](#) currently state that mobile devices should be used appropriately – which means, with Teacher permission in lessons, and responsibly during social time. We have noticed an increase in mobile phones impacting our learning, teaching, and assessment recently – i.e., pupils using without permission - messaging and checking social media; and taking phones with them when they leave classes to go to the bathroom, sometimes messaging friends in lessons or to arrange to briefly meet them whilst out of class.

We have discussed this with our Parent Council and therefore we are making the following changes to procedures outlined below:

From Monday 29th April 2024

- Mobile phones and air pods should remain in school bags or jacket pockets, completely out of sight in all lessons – unless clear permission is given by Teachers to use as part of their learning.
- If a pupil does not have an appropriate bag or jacket with them, devices should be placed securely on the Teacher's desk for the lesson.
- If pupils need to leave class to go to the bathroom, they will sign-out via the Out of Class jotter on the Teacher's desk **and leave their mobile device safely on the desk**. They will collect it back on their return, and ensure it is kept out of sight, as above.

We firmly believe that this will make a positive difference in:

- Increasing pupil engagement and improving progress in their learning.
- Decreasing pupil visits to the bathroom and asking out of classes, therefore maximising learning time for all.
- Improving time spent in our school toilets, i.e., discouraging groups from socialising in them.
- Improving health and safety as pupils will not be on screens whilst walking around the building.



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We appreciate and understand that a small number of pupils will be required to keep their device with them at all times – e.g., if diabetic, and they use this to check levels. *If there are any individual queries, please contact your young person’s Guidance Teacher without delay for a wider discussion.

Home-School Communication Reminder

A reminder that all home – school communication should aim to go through our main School Office as much as possible during lesson times and the school day. Our social times are as follows:

- School Doors Open 8.10am
- Lessons Start 8.45am
- Break Time 10.55am – 11.10am
- Lunch Time 12.50pm – 1.50pm

It would be appreciated if parents/carers could avoid messaging pupils during lesson times.

Expectations of All Refresh for Session 2024-25

Our Expectations of All are currently being revised and all pupil, staff and parent/carer feedback will be sought to influence these changes for the start of next session and further information will follow. This will include a more detailed mobile phone policy, which will be co-created by all stakeholders. Pupil Voice will be key throughout all of this. However, in the meantime, we believe these changes are necessary for the reasons outlined above.

S1-3 Pupils will be notified of this in Year Group assemblies on Friday 26th April in the afternoon. I would appreciate it if you could go through this information at home, to reinforce these key messages.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with us in the usual way, outlined in our [Parental Communication Guide](#), or via our [Parent Council](#) directly.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Drennan
Head Teacher