

22nd June 2018

JCO/VLU/Mob'phones

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Mobile 'Phone Ban

I am writing to inform you of the introduction of a ban on the use of mobile 'phones on Leigh Academy site from Monday 2nd July 2018.

This has not been an easy decision but one that I believe will bring many benefits to your son/daughter.

At The Leigh Academy, we have found that the use of mobile 'phones on site by students has risen recently and with it the increased distraction from their studies. We have seen an upsurge in the number of incidences of friendship disputes based on social media, an escalation in online bullying and a disproportionate amount of time being taken up by members of staff dealing with these issues. Students are choosing to spend their break and lunch times texting/messaging rather than interacting face to face with their peers, or choosing to play a game of sport or read in the library. Mobile 'phones have led to some safeguarding issues as well as increasingly becoming divisive status symbols.

There has been much public debate regarding the use of mobile 'phones in schools. A powerful argument is found in the studies published by the London School of Economics, which found that the results of students aged 16 improved by 6.4% in schools which had banned 'phones. The impact of banning 'phones for these students was equivalent to increasing the school year by five additional learning days!

We have surveyed our staff and **87%** have expressed concern over the negative impact of 'phone use in school. We have consulted with The Leigh Academy Parents Group who were supportive of a ban on phone use in the school day. We have asked our 'Student Voice' representatives to discuss and they have fed back that they feel that there are too many issues with 'phones impacting on their learning and well-being in school time.

It is our responsibility, as educators, to not only ensure that all students have the opportunity to be academically successful but that we encourage young people to look up and appreciate the world around them, we help them to develop the art of conversation and real life interaction with their peers and in their community.

I realise that mobile 'phones can be useful for learning in the classroom, but we have found that the disadvantages far outweigh the advantages. We will continue to support the use of technology in learning via iPads which can be used at the direction of the teacher. We are also hoping to invest further in Chromebooks which can be booked out by teachers and classes to aid learning. Therefore, from Monday 2nd July mobiles 'phones must be switched off in school bags, out of sight and earshot whilst students are on The Leigh Academy site.

If a parent/carer needs to contact their child during the Academy day, then we would ask that the College admin office is called and a message will be passed on. In the same way if a child wishes to contact home then they will be able to go to their College Admin office at break or lunchtime.

Please see the attached sheet for the specific detail of this policy. We will review the policy and make any adaptations at the end of July and re-issue the full and final policy on our website for the start of the academic year September 2018.

If you have any questions regarding this or any aspects of your child's education, then please contact his/her Head of College.

Thank you in advance for your support of this initiative to ensure that your child is safe, happy, focused and learning with us at The Leigh Academy.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Collins', written in a cursive style.

Julia Collins
Principal