



West Heath School
Ashgrove Road
Sevenoaks
Kent TN13 1SR

T 01732 460553
F 01732 456734

Principal: Mrs P Bohacek

19th July 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are well.

Thank you for all your support over the last academic year. It has been a privilege to work collaboratively with you as we have cared for and educated our students. We have all been on a learning journey and I am so proud of our students' accomplishments. As the year has drawn to a close, I would like to draw your attention to several matters.

Student Mobile Phones

This academic year has been the first year we have implemented our 'NO MOBILE PHONES FOR MAIN SCHOOL STUDENTS' from 8.30am to 3.30pm.

I attach below the notification that we originally sent you regarding this, dated 30th August 2022, for ease of reference.

Unfortunately, mobile phones are often used inappropriately. Students use them to photograph or video, often without the permission of the subject. They are also often the tool used by cyber-bullies and those who target others over social media. We feel that children should feel safe from this during school time.

Schools have thorough filters on their IT system to prevent students from accessing inappropriate information on the internet. They also filter all internal communications (e.g. student emails) for use of any concerning language e.g. relating to bullying, self-harm, prejudice etc. This is for the safety of all students. Unfortunately, we cannot monitor mobile phones in the same way. Therefore, for the safety of students, the use of mobile phones is banned on school premises.

In effect, students will not be able to use their mobile phones at any time during the school day, from 8.30am until 3.30pm. Over the Summer Term, Nurse Helen and I met with all the students in their Tutor Groups in my study and spoke to them about this new school rule that would take effect from the 5th September 2022. We also spoke to them about the harmful effects on young people of Harmful Sexual Behaviour that directly harm the children and young people who display it, as well as those it is directed towards.

From a safeguarding perspective and with the best interests at heart of our vulnerable cohort of students, and in line with other schools, we will be adopting this 'No mobile phones to be used during the school day' approach. All Main School students from Year 5 through to Year 11 inclusive will have to hand in their mobile phones to their Form Tutors, upon their arrival in school. The phones will be locked away in purpose-built lockers and they will be handed back to the students at 3.30pm, prior to



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info@westheathschool.com
westheathschool.com



their journey home. Our residential students will also be given back their mobile phones at 3.30pm, so that they can use them in the evenings, as that is their 'home' during the school week. I appreciate that this will be a challenging change for some students, but would greatly appreciate your support in keeping our young people safe. All students have been reassured that they will always be able to communicate with home via their Form Tutors or their Head and Deputy Heads of School.

Please be advised that from 6th September 2023, school will be enforcing this policy. This approach is essential if we are to ensure that we are looking after the safety and mental health well-being of our cohort. Please take the time to conduct parental checks on your child's phone. With your support we will be able to safeguard all the students in our school community.

Student appointments and absences

It is essential that parents /carers of students leaving the premises legitimately, (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day **inform the School Office**. The School Office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back, when they return. Parents will also be expected to **notify West Heath School on the first day of absence** by telephone or by reporting directly to the School Office.

25th Anniversary Celebrations on Saturday 16th September 2023, from 3.00pm to 8.00pm at West Heath School

Please can you advise us if you will be attending and the size of your party, so that we can ensure that there are sufficient refreshments. Kindly email whs.projects@westheathschool.com or contact Mrs Rita King directly on 01732 460 553. Thank you.

New Head of Care & Safeguarding

Whilst writing, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our new Head of Care & Safeguarding, Helen Wix, who will be starting in September 2023 after the summer holiday.

I wish you and your families a peaceful summer holiday and a refreshing rest. We look forward to welcoming our students back in September.

Please take care.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs Photini Bohacek
Principal

