



Education

Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon
Tel: 01369 708508 Fax:
email – maggie.jeffrey@argyll-bute.gov.uk
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
Our Ref:
Date: 15 May 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

New mobile phone policy for secondary schools in Argyll and Bute

You may be aware that concern has been growing nationally over the rise in reported instances of mobile phone misuse within schools.

Definitions of misuse include text/online bullying; downloading inappropriate material; the harassment of staff; and crucially, the loss of learning arising from our learners sending, receiving and checking calls, texts and social media alerts during lessons.

Mobile devices have become a significant distraction for those who own them and to those around them. Even when on “silent” these devices still often light up or make subtle noise during lessons with incoming messages or alerts. When completely silenced, a child or young person’s desire to know if any calls or messages have come in, can lead to a constant checking of their phones when they should be concentrating on lessons.

In addition, significant evidence suggests mobile phones are at times being used by groups of children and young people to communicate during learning time and make plans to simultaneously leave lessons. This leads to those involved missing out on valuable learning experiences and has a hugely detrimental impact on their learning and ultimately their attainment and achievement.

There is a broad consensus across Scotland that this needs to be addressed in schools with Scottish Government and local authority support. The Scottish Government has now produced guidance for schools to address the issue and this guidance has informed Argyll and Bute Council’s new policy on the use of mobile phones in our secondary schools.

We are contacting you to make you aware that our refreshed Council policy can be found on our website [Mobile Phones 1.20 – My Council Works](#) and detailed school policies can also be found in School Handbooks. These are available both on School websites or from School Offices.

Imposing an outright ban on bringing mobile phones into schools would not be appropriate or measured. Most local authorities acknowledge that mobile phones have a part to play in securing children and young people’s personal safety before and after school and on journeys to and from school. Additionally, some young people will require access to certain Apps necessary for their well-being (for example, those linked to a Diabetes App).

Moreover, a ban would not be consistent with the aim of developing a culture of responsible mobile phone use by children and young people and ensuring we teach children and young people how to engage appropriately with the technology that adults in both their working and social lives engage with daily. Consequently, whilst mobile phones will be banned from classes, corridors and toilets; Headteachers may designate areas and times in which mobile phones can be used; for example, breaks and lunchtimes. Those with well-being needs will always be allowed to access well-being Apps during lessons.

This guidance has been discussed in a range of forums and has been agreed by the teacher unions and accepted as Council policy through the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) which includes Elected Members, officers from the Education Management Team and Teaching Union and Professional Association representatives.

Consistency of application and standards of acceptable use, within the agreed parameters of local environment will ensure all members of our Argyll and Bute school communities are aware of a clarity of purpose and equity of application of the policy. Ultimately the refreshed policy seeks to ensure our learners are safe, in the best position to learn successfully and protected from distraction which can have an impact on their wellbeing.

This refreshed policy and its expectations will be introduced across all our Secondary schools throughout the remainder of summer term. As part of this process schools will publicise our Council Policy, whilst making clear the unique features relevant to each school community. Learners will receive guidance during assemblies and PSE lessons; parents by letter / email.

We would be grateful if you would familiarise yourself and your child/ren with the relevant school's arrangements for the safe use of mobile phones and support our efforts to keep our young people safe and learning effectively.

Should you have any questions or queries, please contact your child's Headteacher.



Jennifer Crocket
Chief Education Officer / Head of Education:
Wellbeing, Inclusion & Achievement



Wendy Brownlie
Head of Education: Performance &
Improvement

