



Castle Douglas High School
Dunmuir Road
Castle Douglas
DG7 1LQ

Dear Parent/Carer

Mobile Devices in School

You may be aware via press and news reporting of new government guidance for schools about the use of mobile phones.

The guidance is intended to stop the use of mobile phones during the school day and is part of a plan to "minimise disruption and improve behaviour in classrooms".

The guidelines released by the government suggest that the following could be introduced in any school:

1. A complete ban of mobile phones, requiring young people to leave any devices at home.
2. Phones allowed into schools but must be handed in.
3. Phones allowed into schools but must be locked away securely throughout the day.
4. Schools may let you keep your phone, as long as it's not used, seen or heard throughout the day.

Some of the reasons the government says phones have an impact in schools.

- a) Phones can be a distraction. A ban on phones, or stricter rules around their use would mean greater focus on work and education.
- b) Online bullying is a problem for young people, with one in five having experienced it. Limiting screen time and access to social media during school time may help minimise cyber-bullying.
- c) It would give young people a technology break, which can have a positive impact on wellbeing.

For many young people and parents a mobile phone provides a level of security and reassurance should there be a need for contact in an emergency situation. This is especially true in a rural area where young people might be dropped off and have a walk to and/or from their bus pick up point. However, while a young person is in school there is no situation where they need to use a mobile phone unless they have been directed to a particular resource in class by their class teacher.

In Castle Douglas High School we propose to take a pragmatic, measured approach to mobile devices in school, an approach that emphasises the message that use of mobile devices must be safe and responsible. In school we see all of the negative impacts that the government guidance references; distracted pupils; online bullying; pressure to be constantly connected; negative impact on young people's wellbeing.

What are we introducing at Castle Douglas High School?

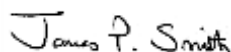
In short, your child can bring a mobile device to school.

- Each classroom has been equipped with a 'photel', a place that young people place their mobile device.
- Young people should not use a mobile device in class unless the teacher has specifically asked or given permission.
- Any young person who has a mobile device in school should place it into the classroom 'photel' for safe keeping. This will become routine in school, any refusal to comply will result in parents being contacted and asked to ensure their child's compliance or to keep their child's mobile device at home.
- If the classroom teacher asks a pupil to make use of their mobile device it can be collected from the photel.
- Pupils moving between classes should not have a mobile device out. As suggested by government guidance we will operate a '**see it, hear it, lose it**' policy.
- Pupils who have their mobile devices out between classes will be asked by a member of staff to hand over their device. The device will then be placed in a 'photel' in the school office from where it can be collected at the end of the day. '**See it, hear it, lose it**'
- Interval and lunchtimes are social times for young people. They are permitted to have use of their mobile device **outside** of the school building during these times. They should not be used inside the building where '**see it, hear it, lose it**' will apply.

Along with this letter you have received a copy of our school mobile device policy. You will see from this policy that we recognise today's digital world provides immense opportunities to enhance learning and teaching. However, these opportunities should not come at the expense of our young people's wellbeing or education. That is why we are introducing this pragmatic, measured approach to mobile devices, to make Castle Douglas High School a safe place for young people to be online.

We ask that you read this policy along with your young person/people and return the last page signed and dated.

Kind regards



Head Teacher