



17th June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Raising Standards – September 2020

Further to the letter from Mr Aldred dated 12th June, please see below a more detailed outline of changes effective from September with regard to raising standards.

In recent years much research has been carried out to determine the impact of mobile phones in schools. Many schools have taken action to remove or reduce the prevalence of mobiles during the school day and they have done so for the greater good of the school community. Some schools have banned mobile phones completely from the site. A study by the London School of Economics found that banning phones essentially gave a week's extra education back to students over the course of an academic year, with schools where phones were banned experiencing higher test results.

There is of course a counter argument presenting a case for the use of phones in school as they are part of everyday life and children need to be able to learn the responsibilities that come with owning and using a mobile phone and learn how to self-regulate rather than work under an enforced ban. They can also be used effectively to support with aspects of learning for example homework and individual study.

Mobile technology coupled with social media present a very real safeguarding risk. Above all that we do in school we must safeguard students and staff from unwanted intrusion and reduce risk of peer on peer abuse. Photos, videos and live streaming are just three mechanisms at the fingertips of students that could be misused and lead to significant harm.

We recognise the need for our students to communicate with each other and develop those communication skills beyond the screen of a mobile phone. We want to encourage positive interaction throughout the school day.

At The Garibaldi School we have considered the research available to us and made the decision to stop allowing students to use mobile phones on the school site at any time during the school day. From 1st September 2020 students should not have their phones out whilst on the school site.

Before a student comes through the school gate their mobile phone should be switched onto silent and put away either in a pocket or bag. If a mobile phone is seen then sanctions will be applied as stopping the use of mobile phones on site will become one of the school's non-negotiables. Any student in breach of this non-negotiable will be asked to hand their phone to a member of staff and they can collect it at the end of the school day.

We will, within the PSCE curriculum, continue to educate students on appropriate use of phones and social media ensuring they know how to use responsibly, how to keep themselves safe and support them in understanding the need to regulate their 'screen time'. We will be developing enrichment opportunities, particularly during the lunch break, to fill the void some students might feel is created when they can't use their mobile phone.

We recognise the need for parents and carers to keep in touch with their children and know their whereabouts as they journey to and from school so, for clarity, phones can still be brought into school, just not used on the school site.

Should an urgent situation arise or you need to get a message to your son or daughter then please do so by contacting main reception and we will pass the information on. Please note, this non-negotiable applies to all mobile devices and The Garibaldi School accepts no responsibility for mobile devices brought onto the school site.

There are two further significant changes we are making from September to help raise standards across the school; our lunchtime procedures and the introduction of a system for ensuring that standards are high during unstructured times.

As most of you will be aware, that with parental consent, students have been allowed to go home for lunch. With the exception of students being registered as young carers, no students will be allowed to return home for lunch from September 2020.

There are numerous reasons why we have decided to implement this change. Primarily we, and I am sure you do too, recognise the safeguarding risk of students leaving the site at lunchtime. We want to keep students safe at all times, if they leave the site we are unable to do this to the same extent. We are one of only a handful of schools who have allowed students to leave the site at lunch and feel now the school has expanded significantly over the last few years, it is the right time to enforce this change.

With regard to raising standards during unstructured times, from September we are introducing conduct cards for all students. Whilst the whole school day obviously has a structure in the form of a timetable, there are those times when students are socialising with peers or moving onto, off or around the site. Those are the times we refer to as being unstructured.

A student must have the conduct card with them at all times. It will fit neatly within a blazer pocket and must be presented to a member of staff upon request. If a member of staff witnesses a student behaving in a manner not conducive to the high standards we set for all students they will request the card and indicate on it why they felt the behaviour was in breach of expectations. Equally if a member of staff witnesses a student demonstrating exemplary behaviour they can record this also within the conduct card.

Within lessons, consequences will remain as our mechanism for addressing issues of disruptive behaviour.

Mentors will check the conduct cards on a daily basis and engage in positive conversations with students about any entries that have been made. From there mentors will apply further sanctions or praise as appropriate.

We appreciate there are numerous changes here and we welcome your support with them all. Please take opportunities to make sure your son or daughter is fully aware of them and as Mr Aldred stated in his letter last week we will fully induct the students with the changes in September.

Yours faithfully



Mr P Hunt
Assistant Head of School