

15th November 2021

Ref:JB/sa

Dear Parents and Carers

You may be aware of the national issue regarding some students creating fake Tik Tok accounts and posting defamatory and offensive material. Unfortunately, we have also fallen victim to this, and the information posted is both harmful and distressing to others.

Please can you monitor the use of your children's phone to ensure they are using their phones appropriately and to protect them from falling foul of the law and creating digital footprints that could have long-lasting implications. I found the following article quite helpful 'Should Parents Monitor Their Children's Texts and Phone Activity?' <https://www.mmguardian.com/blog/should-parents-monitor-their-childrens-texts-and-phone-activity>. If you have any concerns, please contact the school so that we can support you.

We have reviewed the use of mobile phone protocols, and have discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using mobile phones in school and have agreed that with effect from **Monday 22nd November mobile phones, smart watches and earphones should not be seen in the academy at any time.** This is what will be known as the 'Hear it, See it, Lose it' Policy. They should be turned off at the gate and then not turned on again until leaving the site.

Any phones, smart watches or earphones seen or heard will be confiscated by a member of staff who will press on-call and a member of staff will collect, place the item into a named envelope, and hand it in to student services until the end of the day.

The first time that this happens, the phone, smart watch and/or earphones can be collected by the pupil at the end of the day, but all subsequent confiscations must be collected by a parent/carer, who will be informed to collect. The phones, smart watches and earphones will be stored securely in Student Services.

We believe that we have strong systems in place should you need to send urgent messages to your children during the school day. We have recognised that you may wish to contact your children when they travel to and from school and so we have not banned mobiles from school, but they must be switched off and placed in their school bags. Where possible we must mitigate against children looking at inappropriate material, recording, sharing and posting inappropriate material.

Today we have spoken to all pupil's and explained the 'Hear it, See it, Lose it' Policy. Please can you discuss this further at home so that everyone is clear, and we can minimise issues arising in school that would inevitably impact at home too.

The vast majority of our pupils are highly responsible and respectful, but I am sure you can appreciate the need for measures to be taken to protect and safeguard one and all. Thank you as ever for your support and understanding. Please contact the school if you have any concerns via: info@rushden-academy.net or 01933 350391.