



9th December 2022

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Principal Alan Salt

Dear Parent or Carer

I hope this finds you well and ready for the last run up before the Christmas holidays. The end of term always seems to bring challenges, and in common with other schools, we are coping with higher than usual absence, a long-standing lack of supply staff in our region, and of course, new health worries around Scarlet Fever/Strep A.

Please do note carefully the advice sent out to you on Thursday 8 December about Scarlet Fever, your vigilance over symptoms and reporting any suspected cases to us promptly will help keep our community as safe as possible in the run up to the holidays.

It has been great to see how staff and students have continued to work hard despite all these difficulties, especially the efforts of our Y11s in continuing to attend extra revision. This was reflected late into the evening yesterday with so many positive conversations about the hard work they are putting in at the subject parents' evening.

Reminders for Next Week...

Tuesday 13 December is our next online Q and A from 5.30pm-6.30pm, it will be great to hear your questions and feedback as ever, please just use the link below:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_Yzl3NDM2NGYtNzk2NS00YzQzLWI4M2MtMTU0ZTIhMTA5MmNh%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%220c36f116-41e2-4d31-a0d6-699ae4627098%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2247d021a7-f7f8-4ca4-b37f-980e42bca45d%22%7d

Wednesday 14 December is our Christmas concert, an ideal opportunity to start to feel festive. We may revise our start time dependent on clashes with a potential football match - if so, we will let you know on Monday!

Wednesday 14 December is also our KEVICC Christmas lunch. Thank you for ordering your meals in advance - please remember that the canteen will provide a normal breakfast and morning break service this day, but only advance orders for Christmas lunch.

Friday 16 December is our final day of term, and the College will be closed early from 1.45pm. If your young person travels on Devon County Council transport, these carriers will run earlier to accommodate this change. If your young person uses public transport, please check times as they may need to catch a different service than usual.

Mobile Phones/Headphones/Air Pods from January

This is something we have had many discussions with parents and carers about, especially over the last term. We always aim to be reflective around our policies and practices, and we have undertaken feedback from students, staff and parents and carers on this issue over the past weeks. We have also reviewed incidents of use in lessons and irresponsible use at social times. Finally, we have reflected on new Government guidance issued to schools in September and age restrictions on popular apps.

We are clear we need to change our current policy, so that from January 2023 mobile phones and related devices (air pods, headphones and the like) are not to be used, seen, or heard during the school day.

Three key reasons have driven this decision:

1. Any incident where use of a device interrupts a lesson also has a negative impact on all students in a class. This is not fair on most students or their teachers.
2. Although mobiles are widely used outside of school, we feel further restricting their use in school will not negatively impact young people and may encourage more face-to-face social interactions.
3. We are also aware that in some cases, students have not used their devices in a sensible or kind manner at break and lunchtime. Whilst such incidents are rare, we think any reduction in such incidents is to be welcomed.

We have explained this to students this week in assemblies. This is to give students time to understand and be ready for the change from January.

We are aware from the feedback from parents and carers that students may wish to bring phones into school to use on the journey to school or on the way home. This will of course be fine as long as phones, headphones and air pods remain out of sight and out of use from 8.45am to 3.15pm. This means that students will still be able to contact parents and carers after school has finished.

As is our current practice, if students don't meet our expectations, devices will be kept in Student Services and returned to them at the end of the school day.

We know that there may be some specific questions from parents and carers, and we have tried to cover these at the end of this letter.

As ever, thank you for your support over the past 12 weeks since the school year began. If you have a moment over the next week, a quick message or email to a teacher or colleague who has made a real difference to your young person is something that is hugely appreciated by staff - even more than mince pies! You can contact any staff member by email via the website here: <https://www.kingedwardvi.devon.sch.uk/contactingstaff>

I will write to you all again before the break - but in the meantime, have a lovely weekend.

With best wishes,

Yours faithfully,



Alan Salt
Principal

Mobile Phone, Headphones and Air Pods FAQs

1. What if my child needs to check their timetable?

All members of staff have access to a laptop where a student can see or get a printed copy of their timetable. All students will be provided with a paper copy of their timetable from the introduction of this new policy, to ensure no student is disadvantaged. If they require a new timetable at any point during the college day, they will be able to get one from Student Services or from their Head of House.

We will be encouraging all students to check their timetables in the morning before school to ensure they are organised for the day.

Some students specifically supported by our SEND and Inclusion team will have their timetables available in these areas to make things as straight forward as possible.

2. What if my child is sick and needs to contact home?

As with our current practice, students should always go to first aid if they are unwell in college. A member of staff will contact home as soon as possible.

3. What if I need to reach my son/daughter during the college day?

Any parent who urgently needs to speak to their son/daughter should contact reception or their Head of House; they will be able to ensure messages are passed on. Please support your young person by not contacting them by mobile during the day.

4. Can Sixth Formers continue to use mobiles, headphones and air pods from January?

Yes - providing of course they are used responsibly.

5. What if my child needs to call or message me during the course of the day?

If there is a need to organise travel arrangements or if there are exceptional circumstances (for example, a student facing anxiety over an unwell relative), we will make sure students are listened to and Heads of House will be able to facilitate supervised access in a quiet space to contact home.

We also recognise that for some of our young people with additional needs or in exceptional circumstances, we may need to consider making reasonable adjustments including phone use in a supervised space during the school day.

If you would like to discuss a SEND related reasonable adjustment, please complete the link below to liaise with the SEND team:

<https://forms.office.com/e/U350XYxycs>