

Ref:KH/VM/ParentConduct

11th December 2023



Barr Beacon School
www.barrbeaconschool.co.uk

Parent Conduct & Reminders About School Policies

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am saddened to have to write to parents and carers about this matter, but I feel that it is important to share some reminders. The vast majority of parents are supportive of our school and chose us for our high standards and high expectations. However, the behaviour of some adults that my staff and I have witnessed recently, is not acceptable and I hope to clarify any misunderstandings that anyone may have.

Barr Beacon School is a **no mobile phone school**. This is communicated with all parents/carers at Open Evening and is made clear on the school website and in our Prospectus. We need your support in making sure we are keeping our pupils safe. You can support us by making sure your child never brings a mobile phone into school and talking with them about why this is so important.

Mobile phones can lead to serious safeguarding or child protection issues. Mobile phones greatly increase the chances of peer-on-peer abuse, cyberbullying and data protection issues (for instance, taking or distributing images of other pupils or staff). Furthermore, a child in possession of a mobile phone on their way to and from school is making themselves a target for thieves.

Phones can also undermine classroom discipline and lead to pupils being significantly less focused, meaning their learning will be impaired. Please find the below links that summarise research on how banning mobile phones leads to improved outcomes for children:

<https://theconversation.com/banning-mobile-phones-in-schools-can-improve-students-academic-performance-this-is-how-we-know-15379>

If any child brings in a mobile phone to Barr Beacon School, we will confiscate it in accordance with Section 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This states that schools are permitted to confiscate pupils' property, including mobile phones. And although we take the utmost care with confiscated property, the law clearly states that, in the unlikely event that a mobile phone is lost or damaged while in a school's possession, the school is not liable.

Many parents and carers cite that being a no mobile phone school is one of the reasons that they choose to send their child here to learn. They recognise that not allowing pupils in Year 7 to 11 to bring in phones to school helps to keep everyone safe. We are very oversubscribed school. There are many parents/carers whose children are on the waiting list and they want to send their child to Barr Beacon School because of our No Mobile Phone policy.

Unfortunately, a minority of parents/carers whose children attend Barr Beacon School sometimes question our policy, despite this being something we explicitly and repeatedly communicate to any parent/carer who is thinking of sending their child to Barr Beacon School. In a very few circumstances we have had parents threaten our staff with the police. The Police will support us fully in searching pupils for prohibited items and confiscating them.



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Matrix
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EDUCATION WITHOUT EXCEPTION

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If a mobile phone is confiscated, it must be checked in the presence of a member of the Senior Leadership Team to ensure it has not been used inappropriately in the time it was in school. This is to safeguard all of our pupils and staff. A meeting will be arranged at a time which is mutually convenient for everyone. I would urge you to ensure that you know all pass codes for your child's phone and that you are checking this at home on a regular basis. This is deemed to be best practice in terms of keeping children safe as it will enable you to monitor your child's access to age-inappropriate content and to monitor the communication your child may be having with others. Please reinforce with your child they need to leave their phone at home, that they must not bring their phone onto Barr Beacon School site and that if they choose to break this rule, you and your child understand our procedure.

You will have seen the recent publication from the Department for Education (DfE) with regard to mobile phones in schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mobile-phone-use-to-be-banned-in-schools-in-england> indicating support from the DfE on our already established policy.

This policy is not going to change.

Unacceptable Conduct:

It is clearly stated in our Prospectus that if a parent requires a meeting with a member of the Pastoral Team or Leadership, they must make a request for a meeting. Meetings will not be held on demand. Some parents become very upset when they arrive at school and insist on seeing someone to address their concerns. Please be reminded that if you require a meeting, you must make a request and a mutually suitable date and time will be arranged around the core business of the school.

In addition, my staff do not come to work to experience abuse. If a parent or carer is rude, shouts or attempts to intimidate a member of my staff during a telephone call or meeting, the member of staff will end the call or meeting. Please be advised that poor conduct will not be tolerated.

Thank you to the parents who support the policies of the school and help us to educate their children. We will always work in collaboration with parents and carers for their child to achieve their potential and to safeguard their child.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K Hibbs
Headteacher



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