

# CITY OF DERBY ACADEMY

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**November 2022**

**RE: Behaviour**

**Dear Parent/Carer,**

Our vision is to improve the life chances of all students. Positive behaviours are crucial to this vision, and I am proud to say that every day our teachers reward students for meeting our three core values of being Respectful, Responsible and Ready to Achieve. When students achieve enough positive behaviour points they qualify for our Activity Days that include trips to museums and theme parks, as well as activities in school. They are also able to spend these points in our online shop to buy items such as stationery. Other rewards include non-uniform days, canteen queue passes, Amazon vouchers and prize draws for attendance.

As in any school, there are times when some children do not meet our expectations, and our priority is always to ensure that the school is a calm and safe environment to learn and work so that teachers can help all students to achieve their full potential. To that end, **from Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November**, we are making two major changes to our behaviour rules.

The first change is that we are re-introducing a **total ban on the use of mobile phones during school hours** (unless students are given permission by staff to use them). This decision is based on growing scientific evidence that the excessive use of mobile phones can have a detrimental effect on children. For example:

- **Reduced concentration levels** - checking a phone regularly and being distracted by incoming messages means that students are not focused on their learning.
- **Mental health** – excessive use of and addiction to mobile phones can increase the risk of anxiety and depression.
- Mobile phone overuse and dependency is linked to **sleep deprivation** which affects both mental and physical health and children's ability to focus in school.
- **Emotional and physical wellbeing** – cyberbullying and other hurtful online behaviours are made easier by access to mobile phones. Many disagreements and fights in schools start because of disagreements online and are made worse by messages sent during school hours.
- **Reduced social skills** – more time spent online and less face-to-face interaction has a detrimental effect on children's ability to communicate with other people in person e.g. job interviews.
- **Increased safeguarding risks** – unrestricted online activity exposes children to risks such as grooming, criminal exploitation and radicalisation.
- **Increased risk of exam disqualification** – mobile gadgets increase the temptation to cheat in exams, and even if students aren't caught using their phone just having a mobile phone in the exam hall will now lead to disqualification.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the overuse of mobile phones reduces children's ability to learn effectively, which then results in lower grades and reduced life chances. In contrast, research indicates that mobile bans in schools has actually resulted in *improved* results. Based upon this compelling evidence, we are convinced that a total ban on mobile phones is something we have to do to improve the education, wellbeing and life chances of all students at the City of Derby Academy.

Continued overleaf...

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Students are allowed to bring a phone to school but it must be turned off and kept out of sight during school hours. If students are caught with their phone between 08:40 and 15:10 it will be confiscated until the end of that lesson or break. If they refuse to hand it over it will be confiscated by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and cannot be collected by the student until the end of the school day. If students still refuse and/or continue to misuse their phone there will be additional consequences such as detentions. We may also insist that students hand their phone in before being allowed into school, and after repeated confiscations we may insist that parents/carers collect phones after school.

Obviously, if you need to contact your child for whatever reason you can always call the school and we can pass on a message or allow your child to call or message you back.

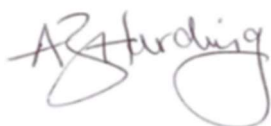
The second change we are introducing is the use of **same-day after-school detentions** to ensure that any minor negative behaviours that day are dealt with swiftly. They will take place in the Hall between 3:10 and 3:30pm and will be staffed by a member of SLT and a Head of Department/Head of Year. Teaching staff will have the opportunity to speak to the children they've placed in detention to discuss their behaviour so that relationships can be restored and students can have a 'fresh start' the next day.

These short no-notice after-school detentions meet the latest government guidance on what schools are legally allowed to do to maintain high standards of behaviour. If students are unable to attend the detention they must still go to the Hall to explain why and so that an alternative detention can be arranged. Failure to attend a detention without a legitimate reason will result in an automatic one-hour SLT detention.

I'd like to emphasise how hard staff work at the City of Derby Academy to help improve your child's life chances. I believe a mobile phone ban and same-day after-school detentions will help us to maintain an environment where your child can remain fully focused on their learning, and I also believe that parents and carers who genuinely want the best for their children will understand why these changes are important.

You can monitor your child's behaviours every day using the Class Charts mobile app. More details about this app can be found on our website at <https://www.cityofderbyacademy.org/parents/classcharts/>

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Harding". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial 'A' and a circular flourish at the end.

**Adrian Harding**  
**Headteacher**  
**City of Derby Academy**