

## Balcarras Phone-Free School

### Main School Policy (Yrs 7 to 11)

Balcarras believes that, while mobile phones can be used positively, their use by children with developing minds should be carefully limited. Excessive use of mobile phones can lead to:

1. A reduction in face-to-face interaction between children.
2. A loss of good conversation skills
3. Additional stress in pupils, as they interact with social media
4. The increased risk of bullying, through social media



By becoming a phone-free school, Balcarras hopes that we are educating our pupils positively, to interact politely and confidently, whilst also reducing the additional stress on our pupils. A phone-free school will hopefully be more relaxed, more inclusive and promote important communication skills in all of our pupils as they grow up.

The following rules apply:

1. All mobile phones must be turned off as pupils **enter the school gate** in the morning.
2. Phones must remain off until pupils **exit the school gate** at the end of the day.
3. Phones must **remain off** throughout the time while pupils are in the school, even when attending an extra-curricular club or helping-out at a school event (e.g. Open Evening) outside of normal school hours.
4. Phones must be **out of sight**, turned off, and kept in pupils' bags.
5. No phone must be visible in pupils' pockets.
6. **Headphones** and **earphones** must also be kept out of sight in pupils' bags.

#### **Sanctions**

Pupils who have their phone visible in a pocket, or leave their phones turned on during school time, or use their phone to contact anyone while in school, will have their phones removed and not returned until the end of the day. Sanctions will be applied in line with school procedures.



#### **Expensive phones**

Parents must be aware that the school's insurance does not cover pupils' personal property. The school recommends that, should a pupil wish to keep a phone at school in their bags, it should be a cheap, basic phone and not an expensive smart phone, as this will reduce the risk of theft and minimise the cost to parents should the phone be stolen or damaged. If a pupil insists on bringing in an expensive phone to school, then parents should make sure their home insurance covers the phone and be prepared to cover the cost of any damage or loss. Lockers are available to all pupils for safe storage of equipment.



### **Emergency Contact**

If parents need to contact their child in an emergency, then parents can call the school office. Main reception is always staffed from 8:00am until 3:45pm and in the event of an emergency reception can always contact a pupil.

### **Trips and After School**

For trips out of school, the teacher leading the trip will make clear the expectations about phone use before the trip departs from school.

For clubs after school, including sports matches and drama rehearsals, the teacher in charge will speak to the pupils and if necessary allow pupils to use their phones, should arrangements need changing or parents need contacting about an incident. Pupils needing to contact their parents after school are permitted to come to 1A3 to use their phones or any Head of House office and seek permission to use their phones if they so wish.

### **Watches**

For organisation and punctuality, students need to know what time of day it is. Without a phone for looking up the time, Balcarras recommends that pupils wear a cheap watch for school. This will ensure that students are punctual to classes and able to plan their time carefully throughout their day at school.



### **BYOD**

#### **Bring Your Own Device**

Some lessons allow pupils to use their own device, for photographing work or researching on the internet. When a teacher gives specific permission for phones to be used during a lesson, pupils may access their phones. At the end of the lesson, pupils must ensure that the phone is turned off and put away, out of sight, in the bottom of their bag, before leaving the classroom.

### **Contact Home**

On rare occasions, there may be times when a pupil needs to contact home. Good organisation and careful planning by pupils should mean that these occasions are extremely rare. Pupils have various options:

- **Tutor:** Pupils can discuss their emergency with their tutor at am or pm registration, and their tutor can arrange for a message to be sent home.
- **Head of House:** Pupils can see their Head of House and arrange for a message to be sent home.

### **Sixth Form**

The rules for Sixth Form students are **exactly** the same as those for students in Years 7 to 11, including BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) in lessons. When Sixth Form students are on site, phones must be switched off, remain off, and phones, headphones and earphones should be out of sight. Sixth Form students whose phones, headphones or earphones are visible or are switched on will have the items confiscated and not returned until the end of the school day. The only exemptions to this are when Sixth Form students are working in areas of the school that are exclusive to them:

- Sixth Form Common Room
- Y12 Study (6B8)
- Y13 Study (6B6)

Sixth form pupils should ensure that their phones are turned off and put away **before** leaving the common room or the study room.