

Good morning students, parents, teachers and the whole Pinehurst community

We are writing to let you know about some changes we are making to the ways students can use mobile phones and other personal devices. As you will probably be aware, we have been looking at this for a little while, and have been seeking the views of students, parents, teachers and others who have a view. The feedback has been robust and wide-ranging: as you would expect, people have views on this issue that diverge considerably, and we want to make sure that we reflect on this with some care.

Our thoughts in this area have been driven by a number of issues. We are conscious of a growing debate in New Zealand and internationally about the way in which mobile phones are used by young people, and on the impact it may have on their wellbeing in a number of areas. In school, we have noticed that it has become increasingly common to see students in College, especially in Years 9-11, spend significant amounts of time using their devices during morning tea and at lunchtime. We feel that one of our roles as a school is to encourage the development of the social skills of our young people, and that these two times of the day are an essential part of that process. We ensure that students work together in class, and develop a range of skills in a very structured setting; at the same time, we should be encouraging students to use their unstructured time at school to socialise and enjoy being with each other.

We do offer a wide range of activities during lunch breaks as well, and we will further encourage our young people to take part in these activities. On this, can you please talk to your children around their experiences of school during break times? If they feel that there is nothing to engage them, please encourage them to speak to their POD teacher or Dean and we will look to extend further the options available.

After consulting widely, we have therefore decided to place some restrictions on mobile phone and device use during the school day from the start of Term 2. Students in Years 9 to 11 will not be permitted to use their mobile phones or other devices at morning tea or lunchtime. They will be free to use them before and after school. This is the same rule that applies to Years 7 and 8, and amounts to a little more than an hour a day during which students will no longer be able to use their devices.

A few notes to help explain the way we will implement this rule:

- "Devices" includes tablets or computers used for anything other than class work.
- If a student needs to contact a parent, she or he should ask permission of a member of staff. She or he should also do so if she or he wishes to check the phone for messages.
- We recognise that gaming is an important part of some students' lives, but we feel that this is something that is typically done at home, and which often takes up a significant amount of time. There is no pressing need for it at school. We will, though, look to create a once-a-week, supervised gaming club.
- A student may use a phone in the classroom only with the specific permission of the teacher, and only for learning purposes.

We are confident that this change to our rules will support better communication between students around school, and ask for your support in its implementation. We will, of course, monitor it carefully, and review it at the end of Term 2.

As ever, we are very happy to listen to your views and respond to your questions. Please feel free to contact any one of us.

Kind regards



Alex Reed



Kieran Verryt



Chris Wiggin