

# MAESTEG SCHOOL

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*Headteacher / Pennaeth: H. Jones B.A. (Hons) N.P.Q.H.*

Dear Parents & Carers,

Four years ago, Maesteg School Governors made the decision to prevent mobile phones from being used in school. This difficult decision was taken for a number of well-considered, well-researched reasons:

- to improve our children's health and wellbeing;
- to protect them from the horrible impact of cyber-bullying whilst they are in school;
- to protect our school community from phone cameras being used within the school environment;
- to improve educational standards by removing the constant distractions that mobile phones pose;
- to help children learn to exist in a physical real world rather than a virtual one

The arguments used then are as valid now, if not more so in the current climate of school life after the pandemic. However, more and more pupils are ignoring this rule and are proving challenging when asked to hand over the phone that they have been using during the school day. Recently, pupils have been excluded for using cameras to record other pupils; using phones to send unpleasant text messages; listening to music instead of engaging in learning. Sadly, parents have also been ringing or messaging their child during the school day which adds a further level of distraction to learning and makes the child feel that they are justified in using their phone during lessons.

The school has worked hard to improve our lines of communication so that a list of staff email addresses has been added to the school website and a dedicated line created for parents to speak directly to the pastoral office. In primary school, when our children were more vulnerable, parents would not have expected to be able to contact their child during the school day and, should they have a concern, would have contacted the school directly to make staff aware of the concern and trust professionals to deal with any potential problems. Please afford our staff the same courtesy and do not contact your child directly during the school day.

We pride ourselves on working with our parents to continue to improve our children's learning experiences at Maesteg School - this is an issue that is negatively impacting on their learning, their safety and their wellbeing and we need your support.

We are only too aware that mobile phones provide an additional security for both children and their parents particularly when walking to and from school, confirming their attendance at after school clubs or parents wanting to check on their safety and wellbeing. Therefore, please be assured that children will be permitted to keep mobile phones in their bags **out of sight and switched off**. Mobile phones will not be confiscated **as long as they are NOT used during the school day; this includes break and lunchtimes**. Where pupils are refusing to hand over their mobile phone to a member of staff, parents will be asked to come to the school to collect the phone. In order that we do not inconvenience you during the working/school day, please reinforce this rule to your child and stress the importance of keeping phones in bags not in pockets and switched off until they leave for the end of the day.

I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Regards

Helen Jones  
Headteacher

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*Motivated to Strive / Ysgogi i Ymdrechu*

