

St Matthew Academy

St Joseph's Vale, Blackheath, London SE3 0XX

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



19 November 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to ask for your support regarding some important issues.

Tik Tok

You may have seen information in the news regarding the misuse of social media accounts by some children. This is an issue affecting lots of schools across the country involving accounts being set up specifically on Tik Tok in the school's name and with the school's logo and then posting derogatory comments about other pupils and staff on the account.

If we find any pupil engaging in this activity, we will take the strongest possible action to protect our pupils and staff. Creating and sharing these accounts is illegal and we will ask our school police officer to address the issue with regards to these malicious communications. Aside from the potential illegality of these types of actions, it is neither kind nor compassionate and they are certainly not in keeping with the ethos we promote at SMA.

You may believe that your child is not involved in such activity but it is still important that you regularly have conversations about online safety and appropriate online behaviour. It is also good practice to:

- Ensure that your child, if under the age of 13, does not have access to a social media account designed for older children or adults.
- Sitting down with your child whatever their age and looking at their phone and the accounts they follow, the content they are downloading and the nature of any messages they are sending to their peers. I understand that we all want to trust our children and to allow them some privacy so only you will know how to deal with this.

Mobile Phones

I would also like to remind all parents and carers about our mobile phone policy in the secondary phase and ask for your support in ensuring this is adhered to. During the school day please make sure your child understands that you will not contact them in any circumstances via either a call or text. Of course if there is an emergency they need to know that parents and carers are able to call the school reception and if necessary a message will then be passed to your child.

Our policy is that mobile phones are expected to be switched off and out of sight whilst on the Academy site. This includes all playground areas, toilets and the area in front of school inside the school gates. Pupils should not have phones visible at any point in the day, including sticking out of trouser and blazer pockets. If a phone is seen, staff will confiscate it. The rule applies to pupils anywhere on site, once they have passed through the Academy gates and until they leave. To address the school's concerns around learning and safeguarding, pupils are all aware of the mobile phone policy and were reminded about it today.

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Our policy outlines an escalation in the sanction applied should a phone be confiscated due to a pupil repeatedly breaking the Academy rule as follows:

1. On the first occasion the phone can be collected from the academy reception after 5 full school days by the pupil. Alternatively, it can be collected **after 3pm the following day by a parent or carer.**
2. When a phone is confiscated for a second time, it can be collected by the pupil or parent after **five** full school days after it was originally removed. E.g. A phone confiscated on a Thursday will be returned at the end of the day on the following Thursday.
3. When a phone is confiscated for a third time in a year, it **will only be returned to a parent or carers** after 3pm from the school reception **five** full school days after it was originally removed.
4. When a phone is confiscated for the fourth time in a year, it will be **kept until the end of term and then must be collected by a parent** from the academy reception at a pre-arranged time.

Please note: If a parent does wish to collect the confiscated mobile phone then arrangements must be made prior to them arriving at the Academy. All confiscated phones are locked in a safe for the duration of the confiscation period and only accessible to certain members of staff.

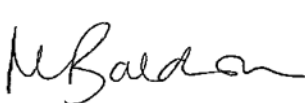
Lateness

Pupil lateness is becoming a real issue at the Academy. We expect all our pupils to be on site at 08:37 am, ready for line up. Too many pupils are arriving after this time and it is impacting our core business of learning.

We are going to change our late system from Monday 22nd November. Any pupils who sign in late, will receive a 20-minute detention on the day they are late; pupils who are late more than twice between now and Christmas will receive a same-day detention of one hour. As an important life skill, punctuality is vitally important to our pupils. Every pupil needs to plan for their journey effectively to ensure they arrive in plenty of time.

We understand our Academy success is down to your support as a Parent/Carer and we appreciate this with regard to the issues addressed in this letter.

Yours faithfully



Ms M Baldwin
Headteacher



Mr A Young
Deputy Headteacher