



Monday 4th July, 2022

### Use of Mobile Phones & E-Safety Update

Dear Parents/Guardians

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to ask for your support in relation to St Thomas More Catholic School students' use of mobile phones in lessons.

Despite most students using phones maturely and appropriately, a small number of students are being distracted from their learning by using their phone.

I know mobile phones are a powerful learning tool and provide access to information easily. They can be used in class for a range of activities as well as being valuable organisational tools. Google Drive and Teams are used to help organisation, set deadlines and as a homework system throughout the school. Therefore, students will still regularly use mobiles in lessons, but only under the direction of their teachers. It is important that students learn how to manage technology in a positive and productive way before they enter the workplace or university.

Online safety can be daunting for some, but we as a school would actively encourage you to maintain an open and ongoing discussion about online safety at home. NSPCC Learning states that "parents and teachers should have ongoing conversations with children about the benefits and dangers of the internet and create an open environment for children and young people to ask questions and raise any concerns." As parents and guardians, it is important to ensure that your child has their privacy settings on their phone enabled to maximise their safety online. The growing trend for smartphone use among children means there's increasing safety concerns. 'Cyber-flashing' is a growing trend where a stranger can send an unsolicited picture to your phone, via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. Most file-sharing apps will allow users to restrict who can send files to them via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. It is important to check the settings and user instructions for your child's apps, and ensure that they also know how to safely operate these controls. As a school, we would encourage you to actively check with your child to ensure that they are being safe online.

I understand that for most parents/carers, their child having a phone with them has positive safety implications and we, as a school, totally support this. At St Thomas More Catholic School, we want to encourage students to become independent, confident, life-long learners who are able to use mobile phones in a positive way, including to aid learning.

If your child always uses their phone appropriately in school, I would like to take this opportunity to thank them and you. I would appreciate it if you could speak to your child about the use of their phone in lessons.

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Your support with this is much appreciated and as always if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Yours sincerely,

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