Atlantic Academy Portland
an Aspirations Academy

Miss Heppell - Principal Type to enter text Type to enter text

Maritime House
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22nd September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been wonderful to see all of our students engaging so positively with their learning. We are incredibly proud to see our students consistently demonstrating their Atlantic BEST, both inside and outside the classroom. As part of our commitment to ensure the very best learning environment for your child, we are updating our policy on how mobile phones and smart devices are used throughout the school day.

The impact of social media and the use of smart phones/devices among children is something we all take seriously and is under increasing scrutiny. We recognise that technology plays an important role in young people's lives, helping them travel independently, learn, connect, and create. However, it can also bring challenges such as disrupted sleep, reduced concentration, increased social pressures, and exposure to harmful or misleading online content.

To help address these complex issues, we have explored a number of solutions. We are excited to announce that we will be launching a new mobile phone initiative with **Blackout**, a digital wellbeing and phone management tool designed specifically for education settings. We consulted at our Summer Term Parent Forum and the feedback was positive from those who attended.

What is going to change, and when?

After the October Half Term, students and their parents/carers will be offered three options around bringing a mobile phone to Atlantic Academy:

- A smart phone with the blackout app installed
- A non-smart 'brick' phone
- No phone brought to school

What is Blackout?

Blackout is a mobile app that helps students manage and limit their phone use during the school day. It blocks access to distracting apps during school hours, such as social media, games and web browsers, while keeping essential communication (calls and SMS) available. Blackout also disables cameras and recording features.

The app will only be active during the school day and does not have access to files, information, location details, personal information or any content through your child's phone nor are any school records shared with Blackout. The only information provided will be your child's name, school email address, year group and type of device, which are used for verification purposes.

The Blackout app is not invasive and no data or content will be visible to the school or app provider. It is a tool, aligned with our existing mobile phone policy that phones should not be used during the school day. Whilst we still expect all students to adhere to this approach, the Blackout app provides a structured support mechanism to reduce temptation and distractions during the school day.

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We believe that working with Blackout is a proactive step in helping students remain focused on their learning, while supporting their well-being, relationships and academic progress. It will support our curriculum, by helping to educate students about healthy use of digital technology.

We believe that the app is very reasonably priced when compared to other similar, physical phone blocking resources (such as pouches or lockers). We are happy to report that due to support and funding from charitable causes, we will be able to offer the app completely free of charge until the end of the summer term, and potentially beyond.

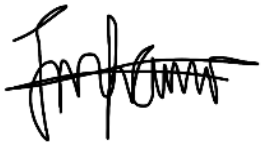
How can parents support the transition?

We would like to invite you to a parent and carer webinar on **Thursday 1st October at 5pm** where members of the blackout team will explain the initiative in more detail, answer any questions and provide a short demonstration of how the app works. We understand that many families may not be able to attend, so this session will be recorded and shared afterwards.

https://meet.google.com/wze-svng-xej?authuser=0&hs=122&ijlm=1789654168076

Thank you for your continued support in helping our young develop healthier digital habits and the balance, focus, and confidence they need to thrive both in school and beyond.

Yours faithfully,



Miss Frampton

Senior Assistant Principal - Belonging