



## Parent Forum Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2026

### Smart phone and device ban – summary of discussions

#### 1. Overall Policy Direction (Ban vs Restriction)

##### Key Concerns

- Some parents feel a full ban is too extreme and prefer stricter in-school use rules instead.
- Concern that a ban is “trying to put Pandora back in the box”.
- Worry that older students will resist or bypass the policy (e.g. bringing multiple devices).

##### Responses / Discussion

- School emphasised the importance of simplicity: clear, enforceable rules are more effective than complex systems.
- Existing partial restrictions have been resource-intensive and inconsistent to enforce.
- Evidence shared that most behavioural/safeguarding issues involve phones.
- Cultural shift aim: empower parents to delay or avoid smartphones altogether.

#### 2. Safety, Travel and Communication

##### Key Concerns

- Strong anxiety about children walking to and from school without smartphones.
- Use of tracking apps on smartphones seen as essential reassurance.
- After-school situations (clubs, waiting alone, late pickup) highlighted as high-risk.
- Parents feel removing smartphones could reduce safety and increases anxiety.

##### Responses / Discussion

- School emphasises:
  - Students can still carry basic (non-smart) phones and tracking devices.
  - School communication systems including reception/office phones can support contact.
- Tracking alternatives discussed:
  - Brick phones (calls/texts)
  - Tracking devices

#### 3. Financial Impact on Families

##### Key Concerns

- Some parents raised the issue of being tied into existing smartphone contracts for another couple of years
- Additional cost of:
  - Second “brick phone”
  - Tracking devices



- Concern about affordability.

## Responses / Discussion

- School acknowledged cost concerns and stated:
  - Brick phones are relatively low-cost (£10–£20 options mentioned).
  - Support will be available for families facing financial hardship.
  - Decision to delay implementation (e.g. by a year) from full implementation in September 2026 to full implementation in September 2027 was done to allow families time to adjust contracts and manage expectations.

## 4. Staff Modelling and Fairness

### Key Concerns

- Perception of double standards if staff use phones while pupils cannot.
- Concern that inconsistent staff behaviour with mobile phone use would undermine the policy.
- Question of expectations for visitors and their use on phones whilst on the school site.

## Responses / Discussion

- Strong agreement from school:
  - Staff must model expected behaviour.
  - Internal guidance already tightening staff phone use.
- Examples given:
  - Staff moving away from phones to school-issued devices (e.g. iPads).
- Recognition that:
  - A whole-site culture change is needed (staff, pupils, visitors).

## 5. Medical Needs and Exceptions

### Key Concerns

- Students using phones for medical purposes (e.g. diabetes monitoring).
- Risk of:
  - Being challenged repeatedly by staff
  - Anxiety or embarrassment
- Concern about staff awareness and consistency.

## Responses / Discussion

- Clear commitment:
  - Case-by-case exemptions will apply where medical evidence is provided and a suitable alternative to a smartphone cannot be found.
- Planned improvements:
  - Clearer staff communication and visibility of exemptions.



- Possibly an exemption register or system.

## **6. Inclusion, Family Contexts and Practicalities**

### **Key Concerns**

- Blended families: smartphones need for communication between households.
- Parent working patterns (e.g. abroad, irregular hours).
- Multiple carers relying on phone contact.
- Concern about students feeling excluded socially without smartphones.

### **Responses / Discussion**

- School reiterated:
  - Not banning phones entirely — only smartphones.
  - Calls/texts remain available via basic devices.

## **7. Safeguarding and Online Risks**

### **Key Concerns**

- Some parents felt risks are exaggerated compared to real-world dangers.
- Others shared serious concerns:
  - Exposure to harmful content
  - Image sharing and bullying incidents
- Debate about whether school should intervene beyond school hours.

### **Responses / Discussion**

- School emphasised:
  - High prevalence of exposure to harmful content (figures referenced).
  - Significant safeguarding issues originate via smartphones.
- Policy aim:
  - Reduce exposure and incidents during the school day.
- Strong parental support from some:
  - Personal accounts of harmful incidents strengthened case for ban.

## **8. Behaviour, Enforcement and Practical Implementation**

### **Key Concerns**

- Questions about:
  - Confiscation processes
  - Sanctions and timescales
  - Consistency of enforcement
- Concern about students circumventing rules (e.g. hidden phones).



## Responses / Discussion

- School approach:
  - Simple, consistent enforcement model
  - Confiscation where rules breached
- Additional ideas:
  - Loan "brick phones" if devices confiscated to ensure safety to and from school and during the period of confiscation
- Reasons given for the rejection of alternatives that the school have explored:
  - Pouches (cost, durability, easy to bypass)
  - Daily collection systems (logistically complex)

## 9. How will the school keep my phone secure and protected during a confiscation?

The school has several specific measures in place to protect phones:

- **Condition recorded at the point of confiscation:**

A photograph will be taken of both sides of the phone to document any existing damage and avoid disputes over liability.
- **Protective packaging and identification:**

The phone will be placed in a bubble-wrapped bag and clearly labelled with the student's name and mentor group.
- **Secure storage:**

Phones will be stored in a secure safe, which will be bolted to either the wall or floor to prevent tampering or theft.
- **Access control and tracking:**
  - A log will be kept (both physical and electronic) of all confiscated devices.
  - Phones will be switched off to prevent access, data usage, or communication.
- **School accountability:**

Once the phone is confiscated, liability transfers to the school, meaning the school takes responsibility for its safekeeping and any associated risk while it is in their possession.

## 10. Why is the length of confiscation so long?

The length of confiscation (up to 3 weeks) is intentional and based on two main reasons:

### a) Behavioural and wellbeing rationale

- The school believes that using a phone in breach of rules may indicate over-reliance or potential addiction.
- A three-week period is considered sufficient time for students to:
  - Break habits or dependence
  - Adjust to different routines



- Develop healthier use patterns ("detox" effect)
- Feedback from other schools suggests that after this period, students adapt and reliance reduces.

## b) Consistency and effectiveness of policy

- The policy is designed to be simple and non-negotiable:
  - *"If this happens, this is the consequence."*
- Schools report that clear, firm consequences work better than warnings or complex systems.
- Evidence from other schools (e.g. one with a 6-week ban) shows that:
  - Initial resistance fades
  - Over time, phone misuse virtually disappears
  - School culture shifts so phones are no longer an issue

## c) Graduated approach

- The duration increases over time:
  - 1 week (Autumn)
  - 2 weeks (Spring)
  - 3 weeks (Summer and beyond)
- This suggests a phased introduction as the policy becomes established.

## 11. Transition and Implementation Timeline

### Key Concerns

- Why the implementation timeline is set as it is.
- Impact on different year groups (especially current older students vs incoming Year 7).
- Adjustment challenges for families already using smartphones.

### Responses / Discussion

- School:
  - Delayed full implementation to allow behavioural and cultural adjustment.
  - Focus first on incoming Year 7 to reset expectations.
- Emphasis on:
  - Education programme for students
  - Gradual rollout and refinement based on feedback



## 12. Alternative Solutions Discussed

### Parent Suggestions

- Phone pouches
- Lockers or drop-off systems
- Strengthening existing “no use in class” rules instead of a full ban

### School Response

- Pouches rejected due to:
  - High cost (£25k–£30k)
  - Easy to bypass
  - Maintenance/logistics challenges
- Storage systems rejected for:
  - Complexity and safeguarding risks
  - Setting the bar to what would and would not be acceptable being challenging with not only students, but their parents/carers trying to circumnavigate these
- Conclusion:
  - Full ban model is simplest and most effective

### For publication on the school website FAQ

#### Can my child bring a phone to school?

Yes. Students may bring a phone, but smartphones are not permitted. Basic phones (calls/texts only) are allowed.

#### Why is the school introducing this policy?

The policy aims to:

- Improve focus and learning
- Reduce safeguarding concerns
- Limit distractions and social pressures
- Create a consistent, phone-free environment

#### How will my child contact me during the day?

- The school office remains the main point of contact.
- Students can access support to make calls if needed.
- In emergencies, the school will contact parents directly.

#### What about travelling to and from school?

- Students may carry a basic phone for communication.
- Families are encouraged to establish clear routines.



- The school is exploring additional ways to support communication after school.

## What if my child needs a smartphone for medical reasons?

- Individual arrangements will be made once medical evidence has been received and suitable alternatives explored.
- Staff will be informed to ensure appropriate support.

## What happens if a student breaks the rules?

- Phones will be confiscated.
- They will be returned in line with the school policy.

## Will staff also follow the same rules?

Yes. Staff are expected to model appropriate behaviour and limit phone use in front of students.

## What if we already have a smartphone contract?

We understand this concern. The policy has been introduced with advance notice to allow families time to adjust. Smartphones can still be used at home and at weekends/during holidays.

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## Will this policy disadvantage my child socially?

The aim is to create a level playing field where no students are using or have the distractions of smartphones during the school day.

## Are there affordable alternatives to smartphones?

Yes. Basic phones are widely available at low cost. The school can provide guidance and support where needed.

## How is the school supporting student safety without smartphones?

- Clear safeguarding and travel guidance
- Staff supervision and support
- Communication systems within school to be utilised
- Attendance at school can be tracked via the MCAS app
- Ongoing education on personal safety