

23 May 2025

Dear Year 6 Parent/Carer,

I wrote to you back in March regarding our current smartphone policies, our work with our [feeder schools](#) and the significant and emerging risks associated with younger students having smartphones and social media. I am now contacting you to share a further strengthening of our policy in this area from September 2025 which will mean that new Year 7 students will not be allowed to bring smartphones and smartwatches to TPS at all. Below we outline the reasons for this policy, how it will work in practice and some suggestions to help parents navigate this change.

Why are we strengthening our smartphone policy?

1. Safeguarding

We now have [ample evidence](#) that children with unrestricted access to the internet and social media are often exposed to highly inappropriate content, cyberbullying and online predators. By limiting smartphone use, we aim to create a safer environment where students can focus on their learning without these potential threats.

2. Mental Health

Evidence is [rapidly growing](#) that smartphone and social media use leads to negative impacts upon children's mental health and wellbeing, such as increased anxiety, depression and self harm. By reducing smartphone usage further, we hope to foster a more positive and focused learning environment while reducing the pressures on young people associated with an online presence.

3. Distraction

On average a teenager receives 237 notifications each day and the desire to constantly check a smartphone can easily become compulsive. [Studies consistently](#) show that excessive smartphone use has a negative impact upon academic performance.

The short film '[A Stolen Childhood](#)' (7 mins) is a powerful summary of the impacts of smartphones on school children.

How will the policy work?

From September 2025, Year 7 students will not be allowed to bring smartphones on to the TPS school site. Any smartphone will be classified as a 'prohibited item' and will be confiscated for later collection by parents, and the student will receive an appropriate

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sanction. All other non-smartphones (see below) must be switched off and kept in students' bags during the school day.

Our PSHE (Personal Social Health and Economic) education programme contains lessons regarding the reasons for our smartphone policy, the risks associated with social media use and how students can keep themselves safe online. Students in the upper school year groups will continue with a daily smartphone collection, and we will evaluate the effectiveness of our new policy for lower school students at the end of the year.

What steps can I take as a parent?

We understand that this policy might require an adjustment for parents, and we want to support families as much as we can with this transition. If you need to contact your child during the school day, you can do so via our school reception and student services. If you would like to be able to contact your child on their journey to and from school, or to check their whereabouts, we suggest the purchase of a cheap non-smartphone (a basic 'brick' phone - see suggested examples below) without access to the internet, WhatsApp and social media. For location monitoring, parents are also able to attach trackers to these phones, such as [AirTags](#) or [SmartTags](#). Additionally, parents can track the location of their children's school iPad at all times using the 'Find My' system.

We believe that this change will enable students to enjoy the multiple benefits of being completely smartphone free for over seven hours per day, including encouraging much healthier, face to face interaction on the way to and home from school. We also hope that this change will help to collectively support parents who are concerned about the potentially very negative impacts of smartphones on their children.

Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us via school@petersfieldschool.com.

We deeply appreciate your support and partnership on this issue, and we will continue to monitor the implementation of this policy as students progress through their time at TPS.

Yours sincerely



Mark Marande
Headteacher

Enclosures:
Permitted Non-smartphones
Useful Links

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Permitted Non-smartphones

Non-smart phones are not able to access the internet/data, WhatsApp or social media and they do not have a touchscreen.

[ASDA mobile](#) offer one of the only UK just 'talk & text' mobile phone SIM cards with no data for £4 a month.

[Nokia 105](#) (not the Nokia 105 4G data enabled version) One of the simplest, cheapest handsets - long battery life, torch, snake game and radio. Comes in a variety of colours. £25



[Oakcastle F101](#) Bluetooth, radio & MP3 playback, 7+ Day Battery Life. £18



[Ushining F200 flip phone](#) - Classic flip mobile phone style, lightweight, long battery life. £26



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Where can I get more information?

Smartphone Free Childhood: <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>

Delay Smartphones: <https://delaysmartphones.org.uk/>

Online Safety Videos: <https://www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/online-safety-videos/>

Helping Families Thrive in the Digital Age: <https://www.papayaparents.com/>

Netflix documentary 'Social Dilemma': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaaC57tcci0>

Channel 4 documentary 'Swiped: The School That Banned Smartphones':
<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/swiped-the-school-that-banned-smartphones>

The Anxious Generation book and research by Jonathan Haidt:
<https://www.anxiousgeneration.com/>

Kids, Smartphone and Social Media - talk by Catherine Price:
<https://youtu.be/Ro-XgHp7OPA?si=nTdrHgEsqHpy8WVm>

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