

Smartphones at TPS

Why have a 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 videos '[A Stolen Childhood](#)' (7 mins) and '[Our kids, their screens, the evidence](#)' (4 mins) are both excellent summaries of the impacts of smartphones on school children. Some TPS students have also [reflected on their own experiences with smartphones](#) at this age in this powerful clip (5 mins). Several countries including New Zealand, Australia, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Ireland, Finland, Greece and Sweden have recently introduced national restrictions on smartphones in schools. Our own government has recently introduced enhanced measures around online safety for children and tougher guidance on smartphones in schools.

How our policy works

Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9

Students will not be allowed to bring smartphones on to the TPS school site. Any smartphone in school will be classified as a 'prohibited item' and will be confiscated until the end of the week. All other non-smartphones (see below) must be switched off and always

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kept in students' bags during the school day. Due to the critical, highly sensitive brain and childhood development stage during early adolescence we strongly believe that enabling young people to enjoy seven hours of complete freedom from smartphones and social media each day, including on the way to and from school, is hugely beneficial for their wellbeing.

Year 10 and Year 11

Tutor collection of switched-off phones each morning as part of our usual 'Smart Start' routine. Phones are securely stored in padded, numbered boxes in our supervised Reception area and returned to students at the end of the school day. Any smartphone in school will be classified as a 'prohibited item' and will be confiscated until the end of the week.

Additionally, students are not allowed to use their phones anywhere on the school site before tutor time. From the school gates, they must be switched off and placed in their bags.

Our PSHE (Personal Social Health and Economic) education programme contains lessons and assemblies regarding the reasons for our smartphone policy, the risks associated with social media use and how students can keep themselves safe online.

If a student is found to have a Smart phone on them during the school day then it will be confiscated and returned to them after they have sat a leadership detention on the Friday of that week.

What steps can I take as a parent?

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 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 iPads using the 'Find My' system.

We believe that this policy enables our students to enjoy the multiple benefits of being completely smartphone and social media free for over seven hours per day, including encouraging much healthier, face to face interaction on the way to and home from school.

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We encourage all parents to **not purchase a smartphone** for their child for the safeguarding, mental health and distraction reasons outlined above. We hope that our policy helps to collectively support parents who are concerned about the potentially very negative impacts of smartphones on their children.

If 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.

Permitted non-smartphones

Non-smartphones 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 2G (not the Nokia 105 4G version) - One of the simplest, cheapest handsets with a long battery life, torch, snake game and radio. Comes in a variety of colours. £20



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[Oakcastle FI01](#) bluetooth, radio & MP3 playback, 7+ Day Battery Life. £18



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



[Xplora One](#) No social media, No internet. No apps. £149



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Where can I get more information?

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

The Smartphone Dilemma - and how to solve it for parents (10 mins):
https://youtu.be/rFsiYAsgx7U?si=5c4b2l105NqC_ynK

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=nTdrHgEsqHpy8WMf>

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