

Bredon Hill Academy

Learning Together for Success

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Dear Families,

Smartphone Policy: working together to improve pupils' wellbeing

We are writing to all parents and carers of our new Year 6 cohort regarding our concerns about the negative impact of smartphones and unfiltered internet access on young people, and setting out the steps we are taking at Bredon Hill Academy to address these.

In recent years, ownership of smartphones has become a 'rite of passage' for young people but we are concerned that this has been to the detriment of children's safety, mental health, wellbeing and academic progress. The widespread ownership of smartphones amongst children has grown, despite the lack of any substantial evidence proving that they are safe to use.

The combination of harmful content and online anonymity puts children at risk, whilst social media algorithms monopolise their attention and erode the traditional features of childhood, including face-to-face socialising, outdoor experiences and play. We see the impacts of this in school with increasing levels of anxiety and mental health conditions affecting children socially and emotionally, as well as struggles with concentration and motivation impacting learning and achievement.

We have watched with interest as communities have begun to organise campaigns in favour of reducing smartphone usage by children and, whilst we are not affiliated with, nor endorse any campaigning organisations, we are pleased that a wider conversation is taking place about the negative impacts of smart technology.

Consequently, from September 2026, we are adopting a phased approach to **ban smartphones completely** from our school.

Our 2026 Year 6 cohort will not be allowed to bring smartphones into school or have them on the school bus. They will be allowed to bring in 'brickphones', and like the rest of the school, these will remain switched off and in school bags. We ask that if you are considering purchasing a phone for your son or daughter, you consider purchasing a 'brickphone' only. We request such phones do not allow access to 'Whatsapp' as we frequently receive issues linked to online safety through its misuse. If your child already has a smartphone, we politely request that this stays at home.

Please see the following links for some recommended smart phone alternatives:

<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/recommended/tech/best-basic-phones-dumbphones/>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/extras/indybest/gadgets-tech/best-dumbphones-b2717333.html>

In order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all our new pupils, spot checks will be carried out from September. Any Year 6 pupil found to have a smartphone on them will have it confiscated and parents will be asked to come and collect it.

In addition to this, smartwatches were banned at Bredon Hill Academy last year. With the advances in technology, smartwatches are now able to function as a mini-phone and as a result, can be just as distracting as having a smartphone. Please ensure your child leaves their smartwatch at home.

If you require further information on how to keep your child safe online or simply want to come along and share your experiences, we will be holding an informal information evening, for current and new parents, on 'Working Together to Support Children Online' on **Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 6pm-7pm** in the main hall. We would love to see as many of you there as possible so we can collectively safeguard our children.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs Karen Dunkley
Acting Deputy Headteacher
Designated Safeguarding Lead