



11 April 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following our initial communication regarding the proposed mobile phone ban for 2025 and the subsequent parent survey, we wanted to thank you for your valuable feedback. Your responses have highlighted the complexity of this issue, and we appreciate you taking the time to share your views.

We recognise that while there is significant support for our aim to create a more focused and engaging learning environment, there are also understandable concerns regarding communication, safety, and the practical implications of an outright ban. Your feedback has made it clear that a blanket approach presents challenges, and we are carefully considering all points raised.

Our current approach to mobile phone usage in school aims to balance the benefits of technology with the need to minimise distractions and promote well-being. However, the survey feedback, alongside our ongoing observations, has highlighted a concerning trend: many young people appear to have developed a very unhealthy relationship with their mobile phones.

While specific statistics on individual usage weren't the primary focus of the survey, the overall picture, coupled with responses in the student usage survey, indicates a significant amount of time spent on these devices outside of school hours. It is not unreasonable to infer that for some students, this usage extends to well over 25 and even 50 hours per week when considering data on popular apps. Alarming, much of this time is often concentrated on platforms like TikTok. The very nature of these platforms, with their sophisticated algorithms designed to feed individual interests, can lead to highly addictive patterns of use, often at the expense of other activities, sleep, and crucially, their engagement with learning. Apps like Sparx, Seneca and Tassomi featured at the very bottom of usage results.

As both parents/carers and educators, we share a responsibility to address this imbalance and ensure our young people can harness the positives that technology can undoubtedly bring, without being overwhelmed by its potential downsides.

A particularly notable aspect of the feedback, both directly stated and implied, is that many young people do not have parental controls installed on their devices to effectively manage screen time, set curfews, and limit access to certain applications. Implementing these simple yet powerful tools is a clear and positive action that parents can take immediately to significantly support their child's well-being, their academic progress, and the overall ethos of our school. Ensuring adequate sleep, which is consistently highlighted as being negatively impacted by excessive phone use, is fundamental for students to perform to their full potential in school. I have previously communicated how these can be installed on both apple and android devices and as parent I fully appreciate how challenging this may be to address, but firmly believe it is an action worth taking.

We have also taken note of the pupil feedback, which, alongside highlighting the educational value some students find in their phones, also revealed a disappointing sentiment. When asked about the potential consequences of a lack of phone access during the school day, the overriding response was "boredom" and a lack of alternative activities. This response underscores a broader challenge that we, as a school and as a community of parents, could collectively support in addressing – fostering a wider range of interests and activities that enrich our young people's lives beyond their screens.

Moving forward, we want to assure you that we will be reviewing our approach to mobile phone usage in light of the comprehensive feedback received. We will also be updating our curriculum to include further education on how to use phones safely, responsibly, and more positively, focusing on digital well-being and the potential pitfalls of excessive screen time.

We will be holding further discussions with staff, students, and parents to see how we can strike a positive balance that supports a focused learning environment, promotes student well-being, and acknowledges the realities of the digital age. We are committed to working in partnership with you to ensure the best possible outcomes for all our students. For now we believe our current approach best strikes this balance.

Thank you once again for your engagement and thoughtful contributions to this important conversation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W. Teece', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Will Teece
Headteacher