

Dear Families

We are writing to you as the headteachers of all ten secondary schools in Brighton & Hove. We do not often write to families jointly, but when we do, it is because we believe something matters enough to speak with one voice on behalf of every child in our city.

From September 2026, all ten secondary schools in Brighton & Hove will be smartphone-free for Year 7 students. All schools are becoming fully smartphone free starting with Year 7 in September 2026. Please see the FAQs below for the definition of a smartphone. Each school will continue to operate its own mobile phone policy and full details will be shared with you through your school's transition information ahead of the new academic year.

Our Shared Commitment to Partnership with Families

We know that the relationship between home and school is one of the most powerful factors in a child's success. Across our city, our schools share a deep commitment to working in partnership with families, listening to your concerns, sharing what we know and acting together for the benefit of every young person.

This decision has not been taken lightly. Over the past year, headteachers across Brighton & Hove have engaged with each other and the wider community over the conversation around mobile phones in education. The evidence, from research and from our own experience in schools, has been consistent and compelling. We are confident this is the right step to enable our young people to make connections and feel belonging within our communities whilst balancing the need to develop real world digital skills.

Why Are We Doing This?

Many local authorities across the country have already adopted smartphone-free approaches and an increasing number of Brighton & Hove's primary schools have moved in this direction too. We believe it is right for secondary schools to follow.

The Department for Education has also strengthened its position: updated statutory guidance now gives schools clear legal backing to prohibit mobile phones throughout the school day, including at break and lunchtime. We welcome this national direction and are proud to act ahead of it.

Our reasons are grounded in evidence and in our shared values as schools:

- Safeguarding and online safety
- Focus and learning
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Relationships and social development

Each school will implement this approach in line with its own mobile phone policy. You will receive detailed information about expectations through your school's usual communications and transition information. Please find over some FAQs if you have any immediate questions.

We are grateful for your continued support in working together to ensure all young people in Brighton & Hove are safe, happy and ready to learn.

Yours sincerely

Secondary School Partnership



Frequently Asked Questions

Smartphone-Free Schools – Brighton & Hove Secondary Schools - September 2026

Further reading and evidence The following organisations provide useful guidance and research:

[Supporting children’s wellbeing online](#) – NSPCC

[Screen time: impacts on education and wellbeing](#) – Education Endowment Foundation

[Smartphone Free Childhood](#) – parent-led campaign and resources

[Mobile phones in schools – statutory guidance](#) – GOV.UK

What is considered a Smartphone?

A smartphone is a phone that can access the internet, social media and take photos and videos.

Can my child bring a basic (non-smartphone) mobile phone into school?

Yes. Traditional mobile phones that cannot access the internet, social media or take photos/videos, sometimes called ‘brick’ or ‘basic’ phones, may be brought into school. They will be stored in line with each school’s individual mobile phone policy, which will be set out in your transition information.

Basic phones are widely available from major retailers and online. Some families find these a reassuring middle ground, giving children the ability to contact home at the end of the day without the risks associated with smartphones and social media.

My child travels to school by bus. Will they still be able to use their phone for the bus journey?

Brighton & Hove buses do not rely on children having a smartphone. All children travelling on buses can use a physical bus pass that they carry each day. Please contact [Brighton & Hove Buses](#) and here [The Key - Brighton & Hove Buses](#) for more information.

How will my child contact me in an emergency?

All schools have offices with staff in to answer queries or pass urgent messages on. Your school will explain how this works during the transition process.

I want to be able to track my child’s location. What are my options?

We understand that for many families, knowing your child is safe is important. A smartphone is not the only way to achieve this. There are a range of dedicated GPS tracking devices designed for children that do not have internet browsing or social media

capabilities. If you wish to track your child's location, you could consider a small tracker placed in their bag instead of a smartphone tracking app. Please ensure you consider privacy and safety carefully before using any tracking device.

These devices typically allow location sharing with parents and guardians and can usually be stored in school in line with each school's policy on personal devices.

For guidance on keeping children safe online and monitoring options, visit [NSPCC – Supporting children's wellbeing online](#) or [Smartphone Free Childhood](#) for practical advice and resources.

What if my child has a medical or additional need that requires a device?

Each school will consider individual circumstances carefully. If your child has a medical condition, SEND need, or other circumstance that means a device is necessary during the school day, please contact your school directly. Schools will work with families to put appropriate arrangements in place.

What happens if my child brings a smartphone into school?

Each school will set out its own approach to managing smartphones on site, including how devices should be stored and what happens if the policy is not followed. Full details will be shared in your school's transition information. The approach will be consistent, fair and clearly communicated to students and families before September 2026.

Why Year 7 first? Will this extend to older year groups?

Beginning with Year 7 allows us to establish clear expectations from the start of secondary school, building positive habits from the outset. We will review the approach over the course of the 2026-2027 academic year and communicate any further plans with all families.

Is this approach being used elsewhere? What does the government say?

Yes. Smartphone-free schools are now in place across many local authorities in England and a growing number of schools internationally. A number of Brighton & Hove's primary schools have already moved in this direction.

The Department for Education has strengthened its position with statutory guidance that gives schools clear legal backing to prohibit mobile phones throughout the school day, including at break and lunchtime. This guidance has the force of law. Read it here: [Mobile phones in schools – GOV.UK](#).

For further reading on the evidence and the national movement behind this decision:

- [Supporting children's wellbeing online](#) – NSPCC
- [Screen time: impacts on education and wellbeing](#) – Education Endowment Foundation
- [Smartphone Free Childhood](#) – parent-led campaign and resources

If your question is not answered here, please contact your child's school directly. Staff will be happy to help. Contact details are available on your school's website and will be included in transition information.

