



Dear Parents and Carers,

Last week we shared our next steps towards becoming smartphone free sites after Easter. Thank you to the many people who have expressed their support. Among our schools, there have also been a few questions that have emerged that we would like to respond to proactively. We continue to value your views and we remain committed to working closely with you through this next phase.

### Context

You may be aware that the government have recently published guidance in relation to mobile phone use in school. This guidance states that: 'All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default'. We are pleased to say that in our primary schools, phones are not a problem in lessons or around the school.

However, we do need to have a clear policy to support our children and families to manage the challenges that arise in relation to phone use. We also want to recognise the role that phones play from a safety point of view for older children who bring themselves to and from school. For that reason, **we are not saying a blanket 'no' to phones as we could do**. We are enabling Years 5 and 6 to bring phones into school when they are coming to and from school alone. **We are being clear though that these should not be smartphones**, thus reducing the risks that these create on the school premises and beyond the gates.

As a Forum Hub, we are six out of 28 schools in the Trust as a whole. Our project is a pilot that the rest of the Trust schools will be learning from in the next few weeks. The policy document we shared with you recently will therefore be reviewed as we formulate a Trust-wide policy, learning from our experience. We are delighted to be at the forefront of this project.

### Consultation

We thought it would be helpful to confirm some of the data behind our approach. We undertook a survey in November 2025 in which 91% of the 376 parents that responded, stated they would feel supported if schools in Blandford took a stronger stance on smartphones and social media. This has been instrumental in the development of our approach, along with some of the research that we provided in our initial correspondence, about the impact of smartphones generally on child health.

### Clarification

[Dorset Council](#) recently published guidance stating: 'Dorset Council and schools will encourage families to delay smartphone ownership until at least age 14, unless there is a specific need.' We recognise that peer pressure sometimes plays a role in making decisions about when to buy a smartphone. We hope that this approach will support parents in delaying the need to purchase a smartphone for their child.

We would like to reiterate the following key points and answer questions you have raised.

- Smartphones should not be brought onto school premises. Where communication is needed for travel to and from school, pupils in Years 5 and 6 may bring a simple 'brick phone' which must be switched off and handed in on arrival. These are available for as little as £15.
- We understand that some families have already purchased smartphones and that buying an additional device may present a financial burden. If you are in Year 6 and would prefer to borrow rather than buy a phone, please get in touch as we may be able to support you with this.

- Some families or children have different circumstances, e.g. medical needs that require smartphone use. Where this is the case, please do speak to us directly because we can put appropriate arrangements in place.
- Some have asked about the introduction of this during a school year. This has been designed to support our Year 6 pupils as they prepare for transition to The Blandford School (TBS). TBS have confirmed that they are highly likely to take a similar direction from September 2026 with their new Year 7 intake. They expect to confirm their position and communicate this to Year 6 families straight after the Easter break as part of their transition programme.
- We have heard the concerns about the timing of this move and, as a result, we will be taking a thoughtful approach towards enforcing the policy during the Summer term. Our intention is to implement as planned but we will work proactively with those who are not yet fully engaging with the expectations, rather through any stringent implementation of sanctions. We will be resharing the policy (with any revisions that might result from our learning), in preparation for the new school year, and will then be fully implementing all aspects.

Please do contact your Headteacher through the school office if you have any further questions.

We would also like to remind you that we will be holding a virtual parent information session, which will help to give you more insight as to the effects that smartphones can have on children and help you understand more about why we have decided to take on this approach.

**Date: 12th March 2026**

**Time: 7:30 pm**

**Location: Online - see attached flyer for details**

Yours sincerely,




Mr Daniel Carter  
Headteacher  
Archbishop Wake CE PS




Mrs Rosaleen Beaver  
Headteacher  
Blandford St Mary CE PS




Mrs Emma Richardson  
Headteacher  
Dunbury CE Academy




Mrs Jennifer McMullen  
Headteacher  
Durweston CE PS




Mr James Law  
Headteacher  
Milldown CE Academy




Mr Andrew Brown  
Headteacher  
Spetisbury CE PS