

TEIGN SCHOOL

SMARTPHONE FREE SCHOOL POLICY

2026/28

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CONTENTS

Paragraphs

1. Introduction
2. Aim of the Policy
3. Policy Statement for All Schools
4. Rationale
5. Approved Phones
 - i) expectations around these simple phones
 - ii) bus expectations
 - iii) reasonable adjustments
6. Searching for devices
 - i) Immediate confiscation
 - ii) Consequences of possession of a Smart Phone or Smart Device
7. Trips & Residentials
8. Years 12 & 13

Appendix 1 Consequences Flow Diagram

Appendix 2 Smartphone Free School: frequently asked questions

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

To establish clarity around expectations for a Smartphone Free School.

At Teign we talk often about our students being ready (for their learning), respectful and safe. This ensures a safe, focused, and conducive learning environment for all students.

Scope:

This policy applies to all students at Teign School.

2. AIM OF THE POLICY

- Maintain the highest standards of education through distraction and disruption free school environment
- Ensure the maximum level of safeguarding of students on the school site
- Ensure maximum levels of safeguarding, health and wellbeing of young people in our community

We will regularly review and measure the impact and success of this policy by exploring data including wellbeing, learning, behaviour and school culture.

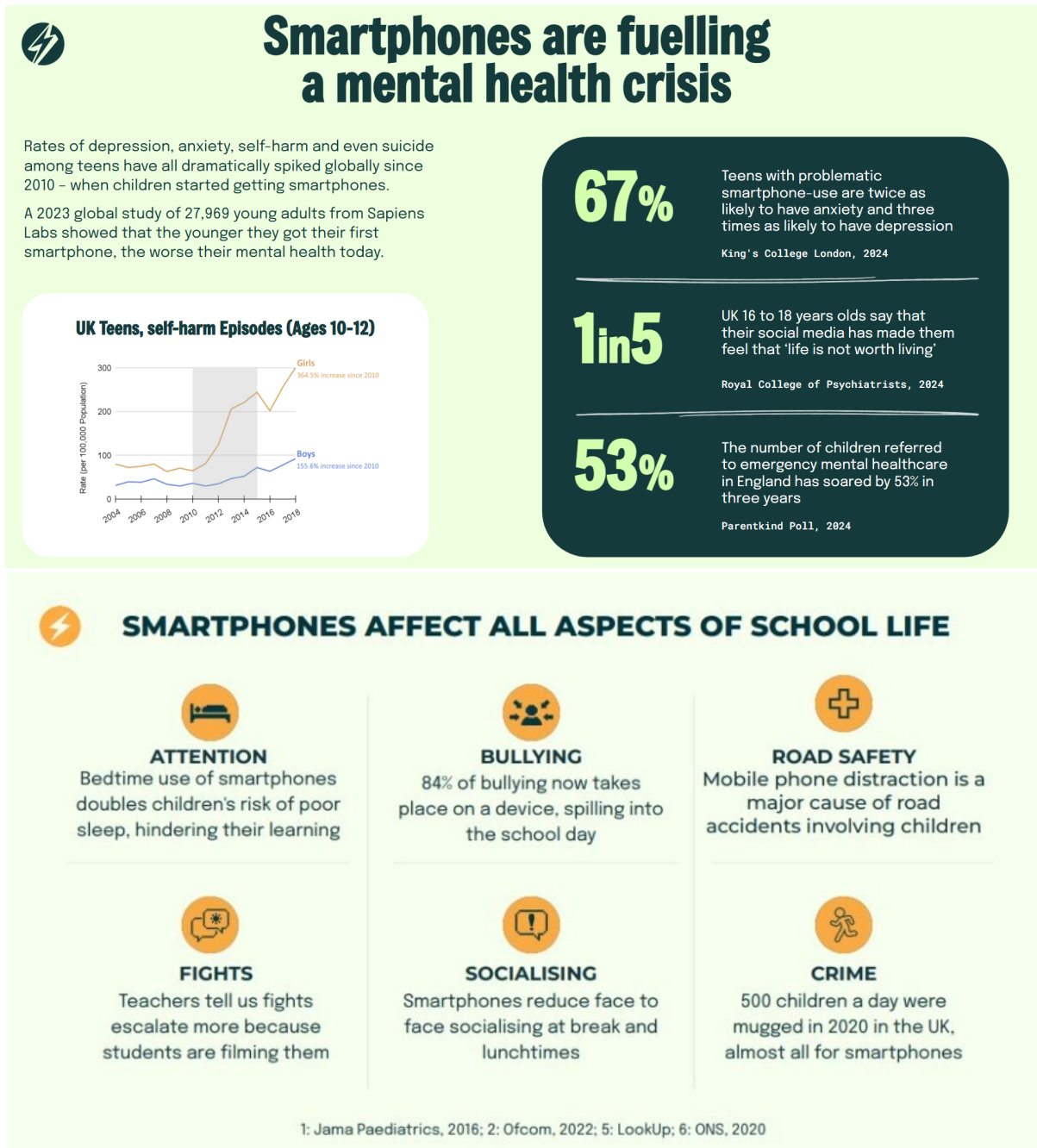
3. POLICY STATEMENTS FOR ALL SCHOOLS

- i) We are a Smartphone Free School
- ii) We make a clear distinction between a simple phone (without the potential for internet access) and a smartphone or any smart device (with internet or potential internet access).
- iii) Students are prohibited from bringing any smartphone or smart devices into school.
- iv) The policy mitigates the safeguarding, health and safety risks related to early access to smart devices and supports the school site being a safe environment for all students.
- v) The policy supports families to make their own decision about when it is appropriate for their child to have access to smart technology.
- vi) The policy is enforced with significant consequences for students who bring smartphones into school

Smartphones and other pocket smart devices that access the internet are prohibited from September 2026. This policy has been introduced to minimise disruption to the school environment and to help tackle cyber bullying, sexting, sharing of indecent images, online grooming and device addiction. The impact of smartphones on children's mental health and development is well documented. Excessive exposure to social media platforms can increase anxiety, depression and even lead to suicidal ideation.

4. RATIONALE

Over the past three years a significant number of studies have been completed providing undisputable evidence of the harm of smartphones on the learning, behaviour, wellbeing and safety of children when provided with access at an early age.



The Teign School survey (Spring Term 2026) of current secondary school parents (303 parents completed the survey) and school survey of children at Teign School (627 students completed the survey) showed that 70% of parents said they would support Teign School becoming Smartphone free.

20% of student said they use social media for more than 5 hours a day. 20% of parents said that their child had found (pictures, videos) that made them feel uncomfortable or worried.

The school is responsible for keeping students safe during the school day; the job has become increasingly difficult due to students coming into school with smart devices that potentially have harmful or inappropriate contact on them and functions that enable inappropriate behaviour or cyberbullying e.g. access to social media, photo and video capacity.

To take effect from 1 September 2026 Years 7 – 11

Parents who wish for their child to carry a mobile phone must adhere to the following policy.

- The phone must be one of the following types: Nokia 105, Samsung E1200 or Alcatel 10.16G or other phone as may be approved by the school from time to time (this will be regularly updated to parents in our half termly letter).
- Any other non-approved phone will be classified as a 'prohibited phone' and confiscated.

5. APPROVED PHONES

Parents who wish their child to carry a simple mobile phone to school must adhere to the following policy.

- The simple phone must be one of the following types: Nokia 105 (approx. £18), Samsung E1200 (approx. £69) or Alcatel 10.16G (approx. £19.99) or another phone that must have:
 - No potential to access the internet
 - No photo or recording capability
 - Cannot access any apps.
- Any non-approved phone will be classified as a 'prohibited phone' and confiscated (see below).



Nokia 105



Samsung E1200



Alcatel 10.16G

Nokia 105 (they do a 2G version around £25 or no G or 4G)Nokia 105 (they do a 2G version around £25 or no G or 4G)

**Samsung E1200 – £59 Amazon. 2G not a smart phone (calls texts only)

**Alcatel 10.1G £48 Amazon but limited access to purchase?

i) Expectations around these simple phones:

- The phone must be clearly marked with the student's name.
- The phone must be switched off before the student comes through the **green gates** on arrival to school and placed in their school bag (this includes getting off school transport)
- The phone must not be brought out of their bag at any point during the school day and should only be used after school when the student is out of the school entrances (determined by the **green gates**).
- The phone remains the responsibility of the student at all times and the school will not take action if it is lost or stolen.
- Any Smartphone / device that is brought into school will automatically be confiscated.
- In addition to a Smartphone, all Smart watches and any other pocket-sized devices that can enable a student to access the internet are prohibited. If such devices are discovered/ seen, then the same sanction will be given as for a prohibited phone on the school site.
- Any simple phone that is seen outside of a school bag or heard during the school day (school approved or otherwise) will automatically be confiscated (please see consequences section for information on confiscation periods).
- Simple GPS trackers such as air tags or the equivalent are permitted if parents wish to track their child's location, but this is not a school expectation.

ii) Bus expectations

It is the expectation that Teign is Smartphone free and this includes bus journeys to and from school. Smartphones should not be used by students until they return home. Our behaviour policy covers behaviour outside of school grounds including to and from school

iii) Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments and flexibility will be made for certain disabilities or medical conditions. In each instance this needs to be prearranged with the school, and the school will work with parents to determine the specific needs of each student on an individual basis. Only a member of the Senior Leadership Team may exempt a student. The adjustment and the specific agreement that the student, school & parent will sign will be referred to in the child's learning plan.

6. SEARCHING FOR DEVICES

There may be occasions where a member of staff is required to search a student's personal belongings to look for a mobile phone or other banned item, if this is deemed necessary in order to maintain high standards of behaviour and a safe environment. Any such search will be conducted in accordance with the DfE guidance on searching and screening. Further information regarding searching can be found in our Teign & ESW Behaviour & Culture Policy on our website.

- If during a search an 'approved phone' is found it will not be confiscated provided it does not contain any evidence relating to an investigation AND when it is found it is switched off.
- All prohibited phones and approved phones that are not switched off AND in a school bag will automatically be confiscated as part of a search. This confiscation will follow the consequence process below.
- Students that have previously brought banned items into school are subject to periodical bag searches as part of their ongoing risk assessment to ensure the highest levels of safeguarding at all times.

i) Immediate confiscation

- Any phone that is seen outside of a school bag or heard during the school day (approved or otherwise) will automatically be confiscated.
- Any prohibited phone which is seen before or after school, **inside of the green school gates** will automatically be confiscated.

ii) Consequences of possession of a Smart phone or Smart device

Any phone that is seen outside of a school bag or heard during the school day (school approved or otherwise) will automatically be confiscated. This includes phones that have been heard from within a student's uniform or bag.

- When any phone is confiscated, it will be handed in at reception and locked away.
- When an approved simple phone is confiscated, it will be securely locked away until collection by a parent at the end of the day.
- Prohibited Smart phones / device will be securely locked away and returned after 2 weeks.
 - if this time runs into the school holidays an agreement on return will be agreed through consultation with the parent.
 - There will be no option for the SIM card to be removed – it will be confiscated and kept along with the phone.
 - If needed, the student will be allowed to use a school phone to contact their parents/carers before they leave the school.
- A student refusing to hand over their phone will be immediately taken to Restoration Room and held for a parent to come into school to support the confiscation of the phone.

- A student that continues to refuse to hand over their phone will be given the opportunity to bring the Smartphone / device to the reintegration meeting and submit for confiscation.
- If this is not a positive resolution, a further suspension will follow.
- The student will return to school on a risk assessment which included daily bag searches for the first 4-weeks and there after periodical checks to ensure that their smartphone does not come into school.

7. TRIPS & RESIDENTIALS

The school's smartphone policy remains the same on all trips and residentials.

On residentials students can have access to their non-smartphone during social times. However, 'family rules' apply overnight with all simple phones being handed to the staff member to keep overnight.

8. YEARS 12 & 13

We recognise that our 6th form students are most likely to own a Smartphone and able to use it responsibly. During the school day, like the remainder of the school 6th formers must have their Smart phone device in their bag, with the exception of the 6th Form Common Room, garden & Study room.

No Smart phones are permitted in lessons.

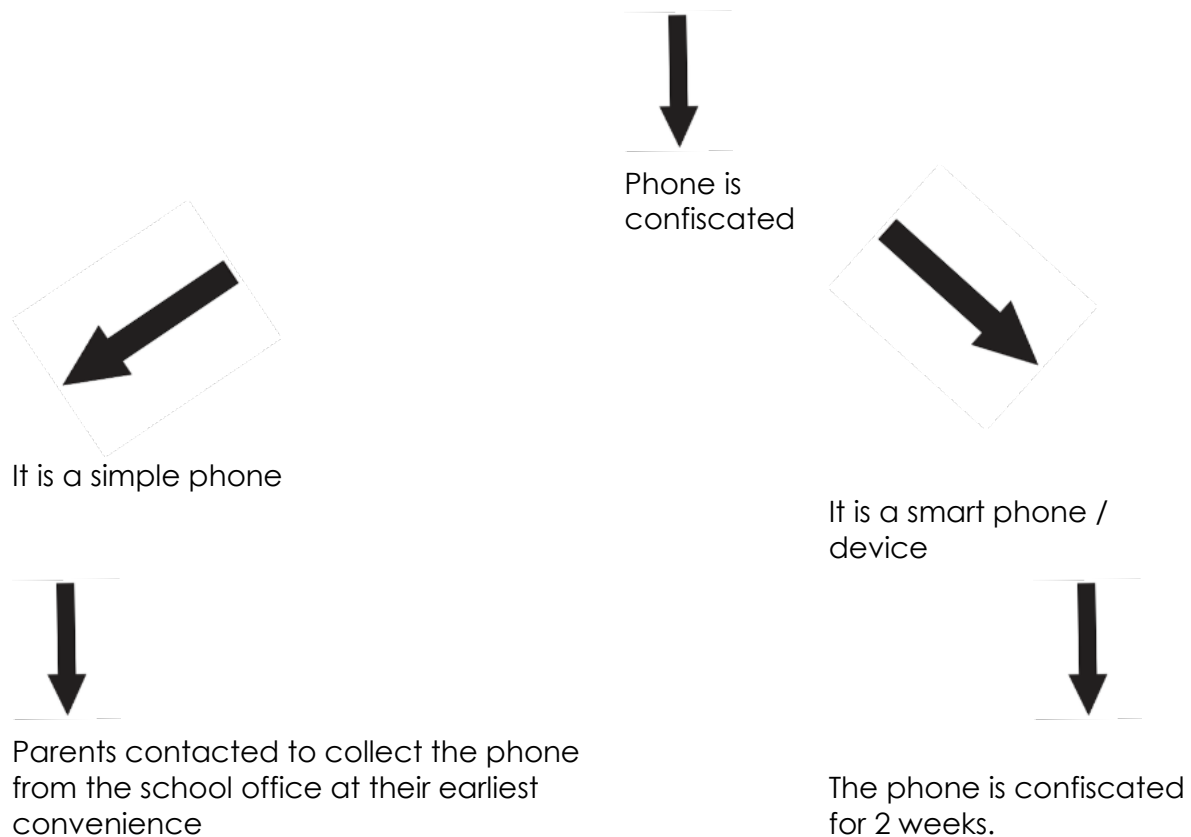
For school trips involving 6th formers, Smart phones are at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Smart devices maybe worn, but must be muted to notifications during lesson time.

If a 6th former is seen on their Smartphone devices outside of the designated areas above, the same process to the rest of the school community applies.

Appendix 1: Consequence Flow Diagram

Student seen with phone in their pocket / possession
Student phone goes off in their school bag or pocket
Student is caught checking their phone on or around the school site (inside green gates)
A bag search finds a phone smart phone in their bag
A bag search finds a simple phone turned on in their bag



Appendix 2 - Smartphone-Free School: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How other schools across the UK have successfully implemented a 'simple phones only' policy and addressed common concerns

1. What about students travelling home in rural areas or in the dark?

We recognise that many students:

- Travel by bus
- Walk home in rural areas
- Travel during darker hours in winter

Students would still be able to carry a simple phone for calls and text messages.

This ensures students can contact home if needed without the additional distractions of smartphones during the school day.

2. My child needs a phone to pay for the bus

While many people use apps for bus fares, physical smart cards are a widely available and convenient alternative. These cards can be topped up online or directly on the bus, including throughout Teignbridge. It's worth noting that many schools across major towns and cities have already adopted smartphone-free policies. Students are managing complex journeys using public transport without smartphones—demonstrating that this is entirely achievable.

3. Do I have to buy a simple phone for my child?

No, there is no obligation to provide your child with any phone. However, if you wish to maintain communication with your child outside school hours, a simple mobile phone is an affordable option. These devices typically cost between £15–£50 new, and under £10 second-hand. Pay-as-you-go SIM cards are often free, and contracts offering unlimited calls and texts can be found for as little as £3–£4 per month. As they do not use mobile data, ongoing costs remain low.

4. I want to decide when my child gets a smartphone

Absolutely. Parents know their children best and should make decisions about smartphone use based on their own judgment. A smartphone-free school policy supports this by maintaining a neutral environment. Parents who feel their child is ready for a smartphone can introduce one at home, while those who feel their child is not yet emotionally prepared can send them to school with the confidence that they won't be exposed to inappropriate content or peer pressure from other students' devices or be photographed or filmed without consent. This approach not only helps to safeguard children at school, it helps level the playing field, reducing social pressure and preventing any student from feeling excluded—whether they have a smartphone or not.

5. My child has a medical condition or special educational need and requires a phone.

If there are exceptional circumstances that necessitate your child having access to a phone during the school day, please contact the school directly to discuss appropriate arrangements.

6. Is the school allowed to introduce this policy?

Yes. Schools are able to introduce policies that support behaviour, learning and safeguarding.

As part of a Multi-Academy Trust, we can develop policies that reflect the needs of our school community.

Like uniform or behaviour expectations, this would form part of the standards that support a safe and focused learning environment.

Headteachers are backed by DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices, if they consider it proportionate, for whatever length of time they deem proportionate.

- Mobile Phones in Schools (2026)

7. My child uses their Smartphone to complete home learning

Students would continue to complete home learning through existing online platforms. These can be accessed through:

- A home computer or laptop
- A tablet
- A shared family device

A smartphone would not be required to complete home learning successfully.

8. My child comes into school earlier and sometimes wishes to complete home learning; how can they do this without using a Smartphone?

This can be supported through several spaces that are staffed before school in the morning, including:

- Breakfast Club in Reach
- Old OC2 room (next door to Reach)
- School library
 - both areas have computers available for students to access.

9. Will this policy increase costs for families?

We recognise there may be cost implications for some families, particularly where smartphones are currently used as the main household device. However:

- Simple phones are significantly cheaper than many Smartphones.
- Basic tablets for home learning are relatively low-cost.
- In many cases, a simple phone and a basic tablet would cost less than a popular smartphone model.

10. My child's smartphone has parental controls - isn't that safe enough?

While parental controls can be helpful, they are not foolproof. A recent Parentkind poll revealed that 47% of children with parental controls had managed to bypass them. Schools cannot verify or monitor the settings on every student's device and must consider broader risks, including exposure to appropriate content via other students' phones, being photographed or filmed without consent at school and having the content shared or uploaded to the internet. Smartphones are designed to be engaging and, in many cases, addictive. With children receiving hundreds of notifications daily, it is unrealistic to expect parents to monitor all activity. A smartphone-free school environment minimizes these risks and helps protect children's mental well-being and development.

11. What if my child lives between two households and needs to bring their Smart phone / device to school?

We recognise that some students require reasonable adjustments for family circumstances, for example:

Custody arrangements that mean a student is in different households during the week

In these cases, exemption agreements will be considered- this is likely to include a space where smart phones can be locked and later collected.

We would work with families and professional discretion would be used.

12. What about the staff and the curriculum?

To this end, there will be no personal phone use by adults around the school site as we recognise that the adults must model the expectations we set for students. We are committed to ensuring that any use of staff mobile phones, is for operational school purposes only.

Smartphones are not required for learning in lessons.

Where technology is needed, this would be provided through appropriate school systems and devices rather than personal smartphones.

Our intention is to create a fully smartphone-free learning environment during the school day where the focus remains on learning, wellbeing and positive relationships.