



# Upper Beeding Primary School

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Head Teacher: Mr M Andrews

Tuesday, 15 July 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

In previous communication, I wrote to you explaining that Upper Beeding Primary School will be smartphone free from September 2025 due to the significant and emerging risks associated with young children having smartphones and social media. I am writing to you now to reiterate the reasons for us changing our mobile phone policy, how it will work in practice, and some suggestions to help families navigate this change.

## Why are we strengthening our mobile phone policy?

### 1. Safeguarding

We now have [ample evidence](#) that children with unrestricted access to the internet and social media are often exposed to highly inappropriate content, cyberbullying and online predators. By limiting smartphone use, we aim to create a safer environment where students can focus on their learning without these potential threats.

### 2. Mental Health

Evidence is [rapidly growing](#) that smartphone and social media use leads to negative impacts upon children's mental health and wellbeing, such as increased anxiety, depression and self-harm. By reducing smartphone usage further, we hope to foster a more positive and focused learning environment while reducing the pressures on young people associated with an online presence.

### 3. Distraction

On average a teenager receives 237 notifications each day and the desire to constantly check a smartphone can easily become compulsive. [Studies consistently](#) show that excessive smartphone use has a negative impact upon academic performance.

Children often get their first phone in primary school and over 90% of 12-year-olds now have a smartphone. This period is crucial for brain development. A [major study](#) found that the younger a child gets a smartphone, the worse their mental health will be. The short film '[A Stolen Childhood](#)' (7 mins) is a powerful summary of the impacts of smartphones on school children.

## How will the policy work?

From September 2025, Year 5 and 6 pupils will no longer be allowed to bring smartphones on to the Upper Beeding Primary site. Any smartphone or smart watch brought into school will be confiscated for later collection by parents. Any parent of a Year 5/6 pupil wishing for their child to bring a non-smartphone to school will have to complete a permission form, available from the school office. On arrival at school the non-smartphone must be switched off and handed in to the class teacher. Phones will then be handed back to the children at the end of the school day.

## What steps can I take as a parent?

We understand that this policy might require an adjustment for parents, and we want to support families as much as we can with this transition. If you would like to be able to contact your child on their journey to and from school, or to check their whereabouts, we suggest the purchase of a cheap non-smartphone (a basic 'brick' phone - see suggested examples below) without access to the internet, WhatsApp and social media. For location monitoring, parents are also able to attach trackers to these phones, such as [AirTags](#) or [SmartTags](#).



We believe that this change will enable students to enjoy the multiple benefits of being completely smartphone free, including encouraging much healthier, face to face interaction on the way to and home from school. We also hope that this change will help to collectively support parents who are concerned about the potentially very negative impacts of smartphones on their children.

Schools are in a powerful position to change the norm, and support parents on this difficult issue, which is why we have been working collectively with the other schools in our area to safeguard our pupils and protect their mental health and wellbeing. St Peters, Storrington and Albourne Primary Schools are also in the process of becoming smartphone free and Steyning Grammar School is aiming to have a smartphone free policy in place by September 2026.

### Permitted Non-smartphones

Non-smart phones are not able to access the internet/data, WhatsApp or social media and they do not have a touchscreen.

[ASDA mobile](#) offer one of the only UK just 'talk & text' mobile phone SIM cards with no data for £4 a month.

[Nokia 105](#) (not the Nokia 105 4G data enabled version) One of the simplest, cheapest handsets - long battery life, torch, snake game and radio. Comes in a variety of colours. £25



[Oakcastle](#) F101 Bluetooth, radio & MP3 playback, 7+ Day Battery Life. £18

[Ushining F200 flip phone](#) - Classic flip mobile phone style, lightweight, long battery life. £26



Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch via [office@upperbeedingprimary.co.uk](mailto:office@upperbeedingprimary.co.uk)

Yours sincerely,

Matt Andrews  
Headteacher

### Where can I get more information?

Smartphone Free Childhood: <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/>

Smartphones: <https://delaysmartphones.org.uk/>

Online Safety Videos: <https://www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/online-safety-videos/>

Helping Families Thrive in the Digital Age: <https://www.papayaparents.com/>

Netflix documentary 'Social Dilemma': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaaC57tcci0>

Channel 4 documentary 'Swiped: The School That Banned Smartphones':

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/swiped-the-school-that-banned-smartphones>

The Anxious Generation book and research by Jonathan Haidt: <https://www.anxiousgeneration.com/>

Kids, Smartphone and Social Media - talk by Catherine Price: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ro-XgHp7OPA>

