

# Merton Junior School

## Smartphone-Free School Policy



Date approved: July 2025		
Next review date: July 2026		
Headteacher	Signed:	Date: July 2025
Chair of Governors	Signed:	Date: July 2025
Date approved: July 2025		

### Introduction

We are committed to providing a safe, focused, and inclusive learning environment for all our pupils. As part of this commitment, we are introducing a Smartphone-Free School Policy, effective from September 2025. This policy reflects our belief that primary-aged children benefit most from real-life social interactions, hands-on learning, and time away from digital distractions. By limiting the presence of smartphones and internet-enabled devices on school grounds, we aim to support children's emotional development, protect their wellbeing, and encourage a stronger sense of community within our school. We ask for the support of parents and carers in helping us uphold this important approach.

This policy applies from September 2025 onwards.

### Smartphone ban – a staggered approach

- From September 2025, only pupils in Year 6 will be allowed to bring in a smartphone, although brick phones are still preferred. Year 5 pupils must not bring in a smartphone at all. If necessary for those in Year 5, a brick phone allowing voice calls and texts without internet access is allowed.
- From September 2026, no pupils will be allowed to bring in a smartphone. A brick phone can be brought in by those in Years 5 and 6 only, if necessary.
- Pupils in Years R-4 are not allowed to bring in mobile phones of any type.
- Any phone that is brought in must be handed in upon arrival and will be stored securely by school staff and returned to the pupil when leaving. These phones will not be used during the school day and must be turned off whilst at school.
- If there is a medical reason why a child requires a smartphone, this must be discussed with the Headteacher first.

### Rationale

- We do not support children owning a smartphone for the following reasons:
  - Development of critical thinking and emotional regulation skills.
  - Encouragement of real-life social interactions.
  - Reduction of privacy risks and online dangers.
- We promote a smartphone-free environment to encourage face-to-face interaction and reduce distractions (this is during the time any child is on the school premises, school trips and residential).
- Children are not permitted to have smartphones on school premises unless prior arrangements have been made with the Headteacher on medical grounds.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to support this policy by ensuring that children do not bring smartphones to school.

- In the event of a child having a smart phone in school, it will be reported to the leadership team, and reasonable steps will be taken to address concerns and risks.

### **Risks Associated with Smartphone Use**

Smartphones offer advanced features, including internet access and social media, which can lead to various risks:

- **Cyberbullying:** Smartphones can facilitate harassment, making it difficult for pupils to escape bullying.
- **Exposure to inappropriate content:** Unfiltered internet access can expose children to unsuitable material.
- **Mental Health Concerns:** Excessive use can contribute to anxiety and depression.
- **Distraction from Learning:** Smartphones can disrupt the learning process.
- **Privacy and Security Risks:** Children may not understand how to protect their personal information, leading to exploitation.
- **Self-obsession and Personal Curation:** The culture of selfies and social media can create confidence issues.

### **Confiscation and Sanctions**

- The school reserves the right to use sanctions for breaches of the mobile phone policy, including confiscation and suspension.
- Any smartphone or internet-linked device found on school premises will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or carer.
- Brick phones are permitted for the journey to and from school for Years 5 & 6, but if they are not handed in to the class teacher during school hours, they will also be confiscated and returned to a parent or carer.
- Repeated violations may result in consequences in line with our Behaviour Policy.
- Staff are protected from liability when confiscating items if they act lawfully and proportionately.

### **Pupil tracking**

Where children are due to attend school trips or off-site visits, we do not allow the use of any tracking or GPS device for an individual child. This increases risk to all children involved and is against our safeguarding and child policy. We do not allow children to have trackers or electronic tags for location monitoring whilst at school.

### **What is a brick Phone?**

A brick phone (also called a dumbphone or feature phone) is a basic mobile phone that primarily offers call and text messaging capabilities, while a smartphone is a more advanced mobile device with internet access and a wide range of apps. Brick phones are generally simpler and less feature-rich than smartphones, lacking internet access, apps, and complex operating systems.

## Appendix 1 – Example Alternative Options to Smart Phones

This list is not comprehensive, and acts only to give examples. They are not recommendations.

### Nokia 105 £19.99

Sim-free mobile phone  
Talk, text and wireless FM radio  
Very good battery life  
Torch and snake game



### Nokia 2660 Flip £50-60

Texts and phone calls  
Very long-lasting battery  
Range of colours  
Bright, colourful display (non-pixelated text)  
Built in FM radio, MP3 player and torch  
Snake (and Tetris but you need to pay for the full game)  
Single rear facing camera (no selfies!)

### Nokia 5710 £74.99

Like an iPod with in-built wireless earbuds which charge when not in use  
Inbuilt mp3 player with storage for thousands of songs  
Inbuilt speaker  
Wireless FM radio  
Great sound quality  
Great battery life  
No wifi or whatsapp



## Appendix 2 – SIM Card Details

When purchasing a SIM card for your child's phone, we advise that it has no data within the contract, but rather only calls and texts. This is so that there is no chance that they can access the internet. Asda, amongst a few other mobile providers, offer this type of SIM card. This is not a recommendation but a suggestion.