



## Mobile Phone Policy and Smartphone Ban

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026

Dear Edmund Waller families,

From the start of the autumn term, September 2026, we will no longer be permitting children to bring smartphones onto the premises of Edmund Waller Primary School. This decision is part of our wider commitment to creating a safe, focused, and nurturing learning environment for all children.

The smartphone ban applies during school hours, including after-school clubs and school trips. We understand this change may require some adjustment, and we are here to support families through the transition.

Smartphones are a big part of life today. Most adults have one, and they are great for finding information and staying connected with family and friends. However, there is now evidence of the negative effects of smartphones and social media on children and teenagers. These include:

- Poor mental health, such as depression and anxiety
- Issues with attention and sleep
- Risks of cyberbullying and exposure to harmful content like violence or inappropriate material
- Smartphones can be addictive and distract children from learning important life skills

Children often get their first phone in primary school, and over 90% of 12-year-olds have a smartphone. This period is crucial for brain development, and the younger a child gets a smartphone, the more potential harm it can cause. Schools have a role in changing how children use smartphones. Parents and carers will be invited to a series of meetings over the summer term to discuss the issue of smartphones and their detrimental effects on children and the reasons why governors and school leaders have made the decision to ban mobile phones. This is summarised below:

- Summer Term 2026: Parent/carers meetings for children in Years 4 and 5, to discuss smartphone use.
- September 2026: Smartphone ban comes into effect.

Many parents may have already signed a pledge to not give their children a smartphone until they are at least 14. If you have not done so we would encourage you to use the link below and join many other parents/carers in making this important commitment: [Sign the Parent Pact](#)

While smartphones can be valuable tools for adults, an increasing body of research highlights the negative impact of smartphones and social media on children's mental health, as well as the potential exposure to harmful and dangerous content. Smartphones, which were never designed with children in mind, pose significant risks to their well-being and development. Consequently, these devices are often incompatible with ensuring child safety. As headteacher, my priorities are learning, behaviour and wellbeing, there are increasing concerns that smartphones are detrimental to all of these. Children and young people's use of smartphones is considered a safeguarding issue, and as a school we are acting in the children's best interests to protect them by banning them onsite. It is



within my authority to ban smartphones on school premises, and many other Lewisham schools are also taking this course of action.

We will be publishing our Mobile Phone Policy shortly once it is approved by the Governing Body. Once published, the Mobile Phone Policy will be available on the school website. This ban predominantly affects children in Years 5 and 6. I understand that many parents value the ability to contact their children, particularly as they become more independent and start walking to and from school. To give you peace of mind while ensuring child safety, it is worth noting that children's phones do not need internet access for emergency communication. Simple "brick phones" or text-and-call devices can serve this purpose effectively. If you wish your child to have a phone for safety reasons, please consider purchasing one of the alternative options listed here:

<https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/alternatives>

We know that there a very small number of children who need a smartphone so that their medical conditions can be monitored e.g., children with an insulin pump. Children who require this provision are exempt from the smartphone ban.

If children are found bringing a smartphone onto school premises, it will be confiscated immediately. Parents will be required to attend a meeting with myself or another member of the Senior Leadership Team to collect the phone and reset expectations. We would ask that you support us with the policy change and undertake the following commitment with your children:

- **Talk to your child** about the risks of mobile phone use and the importance of respectful, safe behaviour online and offline.
- **Explain** why the school is making this change and what will your child need to do differently
- **Support the school's policy** by ensuring your child only brings a phone for medical reasons as outlined above
- **Encourage healthy habits:** Promote screen-free time, especially before bed, and encourage face-to-face socialising.
- **Report concerns:** If you are worried about your child's safety or wellbeing, contact the school's designated safeguarding lead.

Thank you for your support in this important issue. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school office or speak to me directly.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Rennie  
Headteacher