



Lady Boswell's C.E. (Aided) Primary School

Learning Together  Learning For Life

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13 November 2025

Dear parents and carers

Lady Boswell's School – A Smartphone-Free School from September 2026

Further to our announcement at the Parenting in the Digital Age talk at the end of October, we are writing to you all to inform you of our plan to change our mobile phone policy from September 2026. In line with many other primary and secondary schools across Sevenoaks, Lady Boswell's will become a **'Smartphone Free School' next academic year.** That means no smartphones for pupils on school grounds – for any year group - from September 2026.

Why has the school made the decision to become smartphone free?

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 online. This evidence has been growing over a number of years and is now impossible to ignore. Smartphones, which were never designed with children in mind, pose significant risks to children's wellbeing and development. As Headteachers, our priorities are ensuring exceptional standards of learning, behaviour and wellbeing to achieve our School Vision. There are increasing concerns that wider smartphone use by children is detrimental to these goals.

Furthermore, the decision to become smartphone-free is rooted in maintaining the safety of our children. At school we have rigorous filtering and monitoring processes to ensure that children remain safe online on school devices. Whilst children have never been permitted to use smartphones in school, smart devices that have 4 or 5G technology (and therefore do not require access to the school's protected WIFI systems) could leave children vulnerable before and after school to seeing harmful content that is outside of the school's control.

Feedback from other local schools that have gone smartphone-free has been overwhelmingly positive. They report:

- ✓ an overwhelming reduction in the number of pupils being given a smart phone.
- ✓ increased quality of interactions between children before and after school – children chatting and playing rather than looking at screens.
- ✓ parents have felt empowered to delay smartphones with a clear reason of 'you won't be able to take it to school'.
- ✓ having a non-smart phone has been normalised. Parents felt supported in seeking out alternative options and children are less likely to want a smart phone and pressure parents for one as their friends don't have them.

- ✓ fewer safeguarding incidents where children are seeing and sharing harmful content outside of school.
- ✓ fewer friendship issues and conflict caused by children not yet having the skills to communicate effectively online.
- ✓ positive feedback from parents about having the skills to reduce screen time at home.

What is the school's current Mobile Phone Policy?

We are pleased to say that we do not experience the same abundance of smartphones in school as some other local schools. Currently, our mobile phone policy is within a tight framework – **children have no need for phones during the school day and have no permitted access to them once the school day has started**. Children may currently only bring a phone to school for one of the following reasons:

- They have a medical need that requires connection to a phone
- They are a young carer
- They have a long or dangerous, independent journey to school

Currently, parents are required to sign a mobile phone permission request and pupils are required to hand phones into the office at the start of the school day. This policy will remain in place until July 2026. These three reasons will continue as the only reasons a non-smartphone will be permitted in school from September 2026. Even if the child does have a non-smartphone at home, it will not be necessary to bring it to school outside of the above parameters.

I have already purchased a smartphone, what do I do?

We have made the conscious choice to give parents the time needed to manage their children's expectations about bringing a smartphone to school ahead of the change in policy. We also hope that the timing of our announcement will mean that parents can make an informed choice about the type of phone to purchase for their child if they meet the criteria to bring the phone to school as set out in the policy above from September 2026 onwards. Our current Year 6 children are unaffected by this decision and we hope that by informing parents ahead of Christmas we have minimised the impact on our Year 5 parents.

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 the safety reasons set out above, the organisation Smartphone Free Childhood provide helpful guides for parents of alternative options: <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/alternatives>

What about other smart devices, such as smart watches?

Our mobile phone policy states:

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy. Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text, picture and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features. Pupils are not permitted to bring a smart watch to school that has the facility to connect to 4G or 5G networks to make or receive calls and messages or take photographs (sports watches are permitted). Watches of this nature are treated as mobile phones and are expected to be left in the office.

The same policy will apply from September 2026: smart watches that have the above abilities will not be permitted in school under the school's 'Smartphone Free School' status.

Parents interested in finding out more about smartphone use, keeping their children safe online and the Smartphone Free Childhood movement may find the following sources helpful:


saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers

Smartphonefreechildhood.org

Lady Boswell's has two SFC School Organisers who share helpful resources with parents from the national network. Please do contact the School office if you would like to be put in touch with them.

We hope that this decision can be a catalyst for change here at Lady Boswell's: by becoming a 'Smartphone Free School' - and, as a result, reducing the number of children who are given a smartphone - we feel proud to be part of a 'bottom up' change that will positively impact the futures of children in our care.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Saunders & Pullen', with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the width of the signature.

Hannah Pullen and Sharon Saunders

Co-Headteachers