

At St Andrew the Apostle, we are committed to creating a learning environment that supports students' wellbeing, maximises learning time, and reduces unnecessary distractions. With this in mind, smartphones are not allowed on site for students from Years 7 to 11.

We know that parents are as concerned with students being able to take a 'digital break' from their phones as are many students.

If any student has a smartphone in their possession, it will be confiscated and returned to a responsible adult after five school days.

We know that parents wish to communicate with their child as they travel to and from school. Brick phones are allowed on site; however, they must be turned off and kept in their bags until students have left the school grounds.

Should a brick phone be left on, be used inside the school gates, or not in a child's bag, it will be confiscated and returned to a responsible adult five school days after it has been confiscated.

[A range of brick phones, some with tracking facilities, are listed here.](#)

Following a parents and students survey, before we introduced this procedure, we found that:

- 87% of parents were concerned about their child accessing inappropriate content.
- 88% of parents were opposed to students having access to phones throughout the school day (in an emergency your child can be contact through the school office).
- 30% of students spent over 4 hours a day on their phone with 7% spending over 6 hours a day on their phone.
- 35% of students admitted they would like to spend less time on their phone over the course of a week.
- One in five of students wanted 'stricter rules' on mobile phones.

All this links with the recent increasing awareness and public discussion regarding the potential harmful effects of smartphones on young people's mental, physical, and academic well-being. A growing body of evidence links

smartphone use to several serious harms and safeguarding risks, including:

- Poor mental health, such as anxiety, depression, and loneliness;
- Difficulty with attention, concentration, and social isolation;
- Sleep deprivation;
- Excessive social comparison;
- Exposure to inappropriate content including violent and pornographic material;
- Addictive behaviours that children struggle to manage;
- Reduced engagement in real-world activities and relationships (research suggests that the average 12-year old spends four hours per day on their smartphone).

At St Andrew the Apostle, we are supportive of ensuring that all children have a digital break each day.