WOODINGDEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL
Warren Road, Woodingdean, Brighton, BN2 6BB
Headteacher: Mrs G Chumnansin
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs J Fish

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16th April 2026

Dear families,

I want to say a big thank you to all of those that completed our recent smartphone survey. We had a fantastic response and it has given us an insight into how our school community feels about our young people and their use of smartphones.

Survey headlines:

- 94% of respondents said they would *"support stricter regulation on children's smartphone usage"*
- Families were most concerned about their "*children being exposed to inappropriate content online*, *cyberbullying and online harassment"* as well as "*increased screen time and addiction".*
- 96% of respondents said they were "*concerned about primary age children using smartphones".*
- 91% of respondents felt that "*children should not have a smartphone until at least 12 years of age"* (with 58% of families saying they supported 14+)
- 90% of respondents felt "*primary schools should take a firmer stance on Smartphones".*

These results have shown us that our families here at Woodingdean Primary share the same concerns as many others across the UK, and whilst we understand smartphones have a role to play in today's digital age there are growing concerns being raised by parents, educators and health professionals about the impact of early smartphone use on children's physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. Research increasingly shows that internet-enabled phones have a detrimental effect on the developing brain.

Therefore, I am writing to inform you that from September 2026 Woodingdean Primary will become a fully Smartphone free school. This means that no smartphones, smartwatches or other internet or photographically enabled devices will be allowed to be brought to school. I wanted to write to you now and let you know so you have plenty of time to plan for the next academic year. From September 2026 if a Smartphone/ Smart device is brought into school then parents/carers will be contacted to collect it. The device will not be returned directly to the pupil.

Children in year 5 and 6 who travel to school independently, and who require a phone for this purpose, will be permitted to bring in a basic "brick" phone (with no internet access, just calls and texts) to school. Please see links at the end of the letter to various options for some simple devices and SIMS that would be suitable. If your child does need to bring a "brick" phone into school then these phones will continue to be collected by the class teachers on arrival and returned to children at the end of the day. Permission will still be required by the school for your child to travel independently to and from school.

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Of course, If there are exceptional circumstances that require your child to bring a smartphone into school each day, for example if it is used as a medical device, this can be discussed and agreed with the school office in advance.

This term we have Year 10 and 11 students from Varndean School coming to talk to our Junior children about Smartphones and internet safety, this will be an assembly with a Q&A session at the end. I will send more details through Ping once the arrangements are finalised.

We will also be running a drop-in workshop for parents and carers focusing on Parental controls and how to use them effectively. Watch out for more information in the weekly newsletter.

We thank you for your support with this decision, if you have any further questions please contact me.

Kind regards,

Mrs Chumnansin, Headteacher
Ms Doublet, Parent Governor

A helpful list of alternative non-smart phones:

Smartphone Alternatives for Kids

A popular combination is the Sim Free Nokia 105 £24.99 and an ASDA “Talk and Text” Sim card £4 per month for unlimited texts and calls (links for both are below)

Buy SIM Free Nokia 105 Mobile Phone - Charcoal | SIM free phones | Argos
Talk & Text Plans - Asda Mobile

Further reading and resources for you and your child:

The Amazing Generation By Jonathan Haidt | World of Books GB A fantastic book for 8–12-year-olds that explores why people are deciding to delay getting smartphones until children are older and empowers young people to make healthy digital choices.

How should I talk to my child about smartphones? Tips for parents at every stage | Questions | Smartphone Free Childhood A great website to help you navigate the topic with your child.