

27 February 2024

Dear High Storrs families,

### Re: New Government Guidance on Banning Phones in Schools

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing in relation to the recent guidance issued by the government regarding the banning of phones in schools and to discuss its implications for our school community.

As you will be aware, at High Storrs School, we currently operate a 'phone zone' policy that allows students to use their phones in designated spaces during break and lunchtime. Additionally, we permit the use of phones for learning purposes, under teacher supervision, in some lessons. While this policy has generally served us well, we recognise the need to review our approach considering the new guidance. Moreover, the government's decision to introduce stricter measures regarding phone usage in schools is part of a broader effort to address the impact of smartphones, particularly on younger students. We have been closely following campaigns aimed at supporting parents in resisting the pressure to provide smartphones for Year 7 students, and we believe that changes to our approach could align with these efforts.

However, we also acknowledge that simply banning phones during school hours will not fully address the broader issue of social media's influence on young people. It's important to recognize that students have access to their phones before and after school, as well as during weekends and holidays, which collectively make up the majority of their waking hours. Therefore, any meaningful intervention must extend beyond the school environment. If your family is currently grappling with issues related to phone usage and your child, there are resources available to help. For example, those shared our last online safety newsletter which can be found on our safeguarding page: <https://highstorrs.co.uk/our-school/safeguarding>. Other good sources of support include,

- CEOP Education: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents>
- Parent Zone: <http://parentzone.org.uk/>
- NSPCC: <https://nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents>
- UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

In the light of the new guidance and the complexities surrounding phone usage among young people, we will be conducting a review of our phone policy. **We will update you fully when any decisions have been taken and give a clear timeline for implementation – things will not just change overnight!**

**We would also welcome any thoughts you have.** Please do use this link to an online form to share any information/comments for our consideration: <https://forms.office.com/e/cMdP7psEUB>

We appreciate there will be a range of views including some strong feelings. It may also be useful to note that all the guidance supports children having a phone with them (but switched off/out of sight during the school day) that they can use on the journey to and from school if needed (and we know this is something that families are very keen on).

Thank you for your understanding and support as we navigate this issue together.

Warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C. Tasker', followed by a long, wavy horizontal line.

Dr Claire Tasker  
Headteacher