THE MOUNTBATTEN SCHOOL

11 February 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

Smart phone free representations

Thank you for getting in touch regarding our new mobile phone policy. As you would expect, we have received a significant amount of feedback. The majority of responses have been supportive, although a number of parents have understandably raised questions and concerns.

Between now and September, we will continue reviewing associated school procedures, such as arrangements for trips and homework, to ensure they align fully with the policy. In the meantime, I hope the information below addresses the main themes that have been raised. If you would like clarification on any specific point, please do get in touch.

Environmental considerations
Some parents have expressed concern about the environmental impact of purchasing "brick phones." These devices typically contain far fewer rare earth materials than smartphones, are less complex to manufacture, and are generally kept for longer periods. Smartphones are replaced more frequently and are notably more difficult to recycle responsibly.

Cost
We recognise that any change can create financial considerations for families. However, basic mobile phones are significantly less expensive than smartphones, including many second-hand models currently passed down to students. It is also important to note that students are not required to bring any phone to school.

Contact on the journey to and from School
Students may bring a basic mobile phone and use it on their journey to and from school should they need to contact home, for example, in the event of bus delays.

Bus passes
We have been in contact with local bus providers and HCC Transport. All companies accept paper tickets or physical passes, and we are working closely with them to ensure that travel arrangements fully support a smartphone-free school day.

Homework
We are reviewing our homework procedures between now and the end of the academic year. Our intention is to reduce unnecessary screen time and ensure that no student requires a smartphone in order to complete homework.

School trips
Students will be permitted to take and use basic mobile phones on school trips. For residential or overseas visits, we will confirm arrangements in advance. While smartphones are often used as cameras and communication devices abroad, alternatives such as standalone cameras and SMS-enabled phones are available, and we will be reviewing our approach to this.

Why not use lockable pouches?
We considered lockable pouches and consulted schools that have trialled them. Feedback highlighted several challenges: high cost, regular replacement, the ability of some students to bypass the locking mechanism, placing a secondary phone in the pouch whilst retaining access to their main phone, and significant congestion at the end of the school day as large numbers of students queue to unlock devices.

Exceptions
Where there is a clear and evidenced medical, safeguarding or SEND-related need—for example, diabetes monitoring—appropriate individual arrangements will be made. These will be agreed through established medical or SEND planning processes.

Taking matters further
If you wish to pursue a concern formally, our complaints policy is available on the school website. Formal complaints are initially considered by the Headteacher and may subsequently be referred to the Board of Trustees. Please note, however, that this policy change was discussed with and approved by the Board.

Why make this change now?
National expectations are shifting. Ofsted increasingly expects schools to have a clear and robust approach to mobile phone use and to be able to explain the impact of their policy. Approaches that rely solely on students keeping phones "out of sight and out of mind" are becoming harder to justify and enforce consistently. Across our local partnership and beyond, schools are moving in a similar direction.

We have chosen to introduce this change with substantial notice so that families have time to make any necessary arrangements.

Why move away from a 'no see, no hear' approach?
Experience shows that this approach is difficult to enforce consistently. It also relies heavily on students' ability to self-regulate in relation to devices that are deliberately designed to capture and retain attention. Our aim is to create a calm, focused environment that supports learning, reduces distraction, and promotes wellbeing.

Thank you to all parents—both those who support the policy and those who have shared concerns—for engaging thoughtfully with us. We are confident that this change will have a positive impact on school culture, reduce overall screen time, ease peer pressure, and support families who wish to delay or limit smartphone use.

Yours sincerely



Mr C J Cox
Headteacher