

# Bredon Hill Academy

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**Deputy Headteacher**

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**Business Manager**

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**Assistant Headteacher**

Mrs C Bartlett, BA (Hons), NPQLT

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*Learning Together for Success*



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Dear Families,

## **Smartphone Policy: working together to improve pupils' wellbeing**

We are aware that many parents and carers may have the intention of purchasing their child a mobile phone ahead of starting middle school. As a school, we would like to raise our concerns about the negative impact of smartphones and unfiltered internet access on young people, and set out the steps we are taking at Bredon Hill Academy to address these.

In recent years, ownership of smartphones is often seen to be a 'rite of passage' for young people transitioning to middle/secondary school. We are concerned that this can be to the detriment of children's safety, mental health, wellbeing and academic progress. The combination of harmful content and online anonymity puts children at risk, whilst social media algorithms monopolise their attention and erode the traditional features of childhood, including face-to-face socialising, outdoor experiences and play. We see the impact of this in schools, with increasing levels of anxiety and mental health conditions affecting children socially and emotionally, as well as struggles with concentration and motivation impacting learning and achievement.

Bredon Hill Academy is a 'mobile phone free school', meaning that all pupils who choose to bring a phone into school must keep it switched off and in their bag at all times. However, we recognise that out of sight does not mean out of mind and the constant temptation to check phones can be distracting to pupils. Smartphones often have unrestricted mobile internet, meaning that children can access any online content without adult supervision, leading to numerous negative consequences.

We have watched with interest as communities have begun to organise campaigns in favour of reducing smartphone usage by children and, whilst we are not affiliated with, nor endorse any campaigning organisations, we are pleased that a wider conversation is taking place about the potential negative impacts of smartphones. Consequently, we are taking action in our school to address this issue with our current and future cohorts.

You will no doubt be beginning to plan for your child's next step in their education. Moving to middle school can be daunting for both parent and child. We recognise that our school community is drawn from a wide geographical area, with many travelling to school by bus, so families value being able to contact their child on the way to and from school. With this in mind, you may be considering giving your child a mobile phone. We strongly encourage you to consider purchasing a 'brick' or 'dumb' phone which serves this purpose perfectly well, is very easy to buy and is significantly cheaper than a smartphone. Many families have shared that they did not want to buy a smartphone for their child but were concerned about their child missing out if their peers had a smartphone. This is known as a collective action problem. We hope that, by setting out our position in advance of your child

reaching Year 6, you will feel empowered to make an informed decision about what is right for your child.

We look forward to meeting you at our upcoming Parents and Carers Welcome Evening on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Horton', written in a cursive style.

Mike Horton  
Deputy Headteacher