



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Across our local schools and cluster of Alresford Schools meetings, we have been discussing how best to support children as they grow up in an increasingly connected world. Many families are exploring safer, simpler alternatives to internet enabled devices to protect their time, wellbeing, and development.

While smartphones can be useful tools for adults, we know they also come with serious risks for children including exposure to social media and distractions that are not age appropriate. The average age at which children receive smartphones continues to drop, with some as young as Key Stage 1 now accessing the internet through personal devices.

You can explore more information and resources here:

- smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk
- Papaya Parents
- delaysmartphones.org.uk
- Childnet: Parents & Carers
- *The Social Dilemma* documentary: [Watch the trailer on YouTube](#)

When we refer to “smartphones,” we mean devices that can access the internet, as opposed to basic mobile phones that are limited to calls and texts. While it's completely understandable that many parents want a way to stay in touch with their children, especially as they become more independent, there are safer and simpler alternatives. A wide range of basic phones, often called ‘feature phones’ or ‘dumb phones,’ are available for as little as £20 and still allow you to call or message your child when needed (some even have GPS trackers). [See some alternative phones here.](#)

Smartphone-related concerns for children include:

- They are highly addictive, affecting young, developing brains in ways similar to gambling.
- There is a strong link to poor mental health, including increased rates of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, particularly in adolescents.
- Children are at risk of being exposed to harmful or inappropriate content, including online bullying, grooming, pornography and violence.
- Reduced concentration and attention spans are becoming more common, impacting learning and development.
- Most worryingly, excessive screen time can disrupt healthy childhood development, reducing opportunities for imaginative play, physical activity and face-to-face social interaction.



Because of these risks, we are joining the national call for a delay in giving children smartphones until they reach Year 9. If a phone is necessary for safety or communication, we recommend choosing one that only supports calls and texts.

As Headteachers, we are committed to supporting this movement by promoting smartphone-free environments in our schools. However, we cannot do this alone. This effort depends on parents standing together to create a new shared norm so that children no longer feel pressure from peers or social trends to own a smartphone before they are ready.

By working together across our communities and beyond, we believe we can help protect children's wellbeing and support their healthy development in a fast-changing digital world. If you would like more information about this issue, including practical advice and recommended phone alternatives, please speak to your child's school or explore the resources linked above.

We hope that this change will enable students to enjoy multiple benefits of being completely smartphone free and will also help to collectively support parents who are concerned about the potentially very negative impacts of smartphones on their children.

Thank you for standing with us in putting children's long-term wellbeing first.

Yours faithfully,

Headteachers of the Alresford Schools in this initiative

Cheriton Primary School, Four Marks CE Primary School, Perins School,
Preston Candover CE Primary School, Sun Hill Infant School and Sun Hill Junior School

