

Rowledge C of E
Primary School



Achievement
For All

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Dear Parents,

We are increasingly concerned, as I know you are, about the impact of smartphones and technology on our children (see visual re parent's views).

Whilst there are huge benefits to some technology, there is evidence that the cost to childhood is growing. Society is changing. People are struggling more. We think that the exposure to social media is significant in this.

There is now a wealth of evidence of the negative effects of smartphones and social media on children and teenagers. These include:

- Poor mental health, such as depression and anxiety
- Issues with attention and sleep
- Risks of cyberbullying and exposure to harmful content like violence or inappropriate material

Smartphones are made to be addictive. They distract children (and adults) and are stopping children from learning important life skills.

At present, children often get their first phone in primary school, and over 90% of 12-year-olds have a smartphone. This period is crucial for brain development, and the younger a child gets a smartphone, the more potential harm it can cause.

We want to help you to change this. We want society to understand that things need to change.

We are committed to ensuring that our school environment remains smartphone-free for children, and we want this to continue for them into their secondary schools.

Currently, we trust the children to keep them in their lockers, which is working in our school, but we really want them to understand that we don't want them to have them at all and therefore we don't want them to be in school at all. Along with other local schools, we are looking to make this a rule from September 2025.

We encourage you to delay giving a smartphone to your child until they are at least **14 years old**. A growing number of parents and schools across the country are choosing to do this.

If you need to contact your child while they travel to and from school, a simple 'brick' phone is enough. 'Brick' phones do not have internet connectivity, and they are inexpensive. They do not impact on mental health, or attention or sleep.

Alternatives to a smartphone can be found here:

<https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/alternatives>

We know that this isn't going to happen overnight, but we want to be on the journey to promoting positive mental health and successful childhoods.

Perhaps parents in Year 4 and 5 can consider taking this stand together, rather than providing a smartphone.

We will help in any way that we can.

The smartphone free childhood movement recognises the impossible position parents have been placed in – either we give our children access to a device we know is harmful or we risk alienating them from their peers. If we all agree to delay giving our children smartphones, and instead give them brick phones until at least the end of Year 9, the peer pressure instantly reduces. Saying no can feel impossible when you're acting alone. **Acting collectively makes it infinitely easier.**

If you would like to find out more about support for parents who want their children to be smartphone free, do please visit [Smartphone Free Childhood](#). I would highly recommend this website. It is well researched and I have been working closely with the founders. **We would like all of you to sign the pact together! From Years R- 6, eventually.** We know that most of you completely agree, and already wish that things could be different.

This has to start somewhere. You can protect your child's mental health by delaying this.

Please also see the medical information attached on screen time. We are reviewing our tech use in school too. We feel that we have a pretty good balance in school, and with our homework offering. Any feedback is much appreciated.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Sarah Oliver, The Rowledge School Team and the School Governors