



Briar Hill Infant School, St. Margaret's CE Junior School, St. Josephs Catholic Primary School, St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Whitnash Primary School



Smartphone Free Schools from September 2025

30th June 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

As part of a group of local schools, we have been working alongside [Smartphone Free Childhood](#) to consider how our schools can work together to help to raise awareness to protect our children's childhoods whilst exploring the way that technology can be both helpful and harmful. Following the two, free LIVE sessions for parents in May and June, we have taken the decision to become **Smartphone Free Schools** from September 2025. **From September 2025, children will be not be permitted to bring a smartphone to school.**

Why are we becoming smartphone free?

To take the pressure and expectation away from parents to give smartphones to young children.

We understand that many parents do **not** want to give their child a smartphone but feel pressured to do so, due to social pressures and the peer pressure experienced by our children to have a smartphone in readiness for secondary school. Increasing numbers of parents are providing their children with a smartphone in Years 5 and 6, and even younger. Continual changes in technology mean it is incredibly difficult for parents to monitor these advances robustly, particularly ensuring children only use age-appropriate apps. We are experiencing an exponential increase in behaviour fall-outs and more serious concerns relating to children's use of these apps. We have also seen an increase in children bringing smartphones to school who do not walk to/from school independently.

It is important that as the adults, we make the right decisions for children, based on what children need and not necessarily what they want.

To protect children from harm.

Research shows that many children show signs of behavioural addiction to smartphone devices. The [latest evidence](#) communicates the negative impact that use of smartphones can have for children. This [powerful short film](#) gives a good summary of the problem. For a longer watch, [this talk](#) from the Psychologist Jonathan Haidt gives a more detailed rundown of the evidence and is a powerful watch and presents how smartphones are experience blockers, distracting children from engaging in the real world. These clips are for adults to watch to inform their discussions with their children.

Research states that the average UK 12-year-old spends [29 hours a week](#), equivalent to a part-time job, on their smartphone. This leaves little time for the real-world activities and relationships that enable them to learn and practice essential life skills needed for the transition to adulthood. The younger a child receives a smartphone, [the worse their mental health](#). A fifth of UK 3-4 year olds own their own device and [24% of 5-7 year-olds](#) do. [Smartphone Free Childhood](#) encourage parents to sign up to the Parent Pledge which encourages parents/carers to delay giving their child a smartphone until they have completed Year 9.

What can replace smartphones?

When you decide to buy your child a phone, it does not have to be a smartphone. There are alternatives. If your child currently has a smartphone, there are simpler **'first phones'** available that allow for calls and text only, with no internet, no app store and no social media.

What does this mean for Year 5 and 6 children?

Only Year 5 and 6 children are allowed to walk or cycle to and from school independently or with friends. Particularly for these children, some parents currently provide a phone for their child to make contact with them.

From September 2025, children who walk or cycle to/from school independently or with friends will only be allowed to bring 'first phone' style phones to school. These can be stored in the classroom safes. Any smartphones found to be brought into school will not be handed back to the child, but will be kept in the school office for parents to collect. Children who are brought to school and collected by an adult are not allowed to bring any type of phone into school. We appreciate parental support with this.

Finally, if you were unable to attend the parent sessions in May/June, further sessions are being planned led by Smartphone Free Childhood, locally. There was overwhelming positive parent feedback from these sessions about the evidence and research and how as a supportive group, we can make a difference. In response to these sessions, many of our school community (staff and parents included) have reflected on our/their own use of smartphones in front of children and taken steps to change habits and excessive use.

Kind regards,

Headteachers and Smartphone Free Childhood Team

*The Federation of Briar Hill Infant School and St. Margaret's Junior School
St Joseph's and St Mary Immaculate Catholic Schools Partnership
Whitnash Primary School*

***We are schools that are committed to safeguarding and promoting
the welfare of children and young people.***