



HOLY TRINITY & S. SILAS C. E. PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Head Teacher: Mrs L. Goll Deputy: Mr N. McIntyre



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Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may have seen on social media, there is a growing movement amongst parents to support a campaign called **'Smartphone-Free Childhood.'** You can find out more by clicking these links:

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

<https://delaysmartphones.org.uk/>

By 'smartphones,' we refer to phones that are able to access the internet, as opposed to mobile phones that can only text and make phone calls.

We understand the importance of being able to contact your child as they become more independent, walking to and from school, in order to give you peace of mind and for children to be able to call in emergencies. Children's phones do not need to have access to the internet in order for you to keep them safe however.

The use of smartphones is now a feature of daily life for most adults and over the last few years the age at which children are given their first smartphone has dropped significantly. We believe that some children as young as Key Stage 1 have smartphones.

Whilst smartphones can be a very helpful piece of technology for adults, they can equally expose children to a number of negative risks including the following:

- They are highly addictive, with the lasting effects on young and developing brains being similar to that of gambling.
- They have been linked to poor mental health, depression and low self-esteem, especially in young teenagers.
- There is potential exposure to harmful content including pornography, grooming, bullying and material that is not age appropriate.
- There is a reduction in attention spans – they are changing the way children's brains develop and fundamentally affecting their ability to concentrate.
- They rob children of their childhood. Time spent on a device reduces time spent playing, interacting and developing vital social skills.



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As a school, we support the growing movement across the country to change the 'normal' age that children are given smartphones. We urge all parents to delay giving children a smartphone until they reach the age of 14, opting instead for a text/call phone alternative if necessary.

In order for this movement to be successful, parents/carers are fundamental. It needs our children's parents/carers to resist the pressure from their children and their peers and to hold back on giving children smartphones until they are at least 14. In this way we will all be working together with a wide network of parents and schools to re-set the expectation and remove social peer pressure.

To find out more about this issue (including the facts listed above and alternative phone options) or to become more actively involved, please click on the links in this letter.

There is also an HTSS group on the Smartphone-Free Childhood WhatsApp community, which has links to more information including local talks and events. A link to this group will be shared with class WhatsApp groups via PiP.

We live in a world where fast-changing technology is actually impacting the development of our children's brains, it is therefore our duty to stand up for them, to protect their childhood and to enable them to grow into confident and happy young people.

Thank you for your support.

Lorraine Goll



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