



A Joint Statement on a Smartphone Free Childhood

Petersfield Area Local Schools (PALS)

Dear Parents and Carers,

Across the Petersfield area, schools are working together to support the growing **Smartphone Free Childhood** movement. The aim is simple: to help children enjoy childhood for longer by delaying access to smartphones and social media.

By "smartphones", we mean phones, smart watches and glasses that can access the internet, social media and apps. This is different from basic mobile phones ('brick phones') that only allow calls and texts. We understand that many parents want to stay in touch with their children as they become more independent. For this reason, many families are now choosing a basic phone that allows calls and messages without internet access.

Research shows that [early access to smartphones and social media](#) can increase children's exposure to cyberbullying, inappropriate content, online predators and other safeguarding risks. It can also affect concentration, sleep, wellbeing and time spent with friends and family.

[Research](#) from the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that communities where parents worked together to delay smartphone ownership saw lower levels of children's social, emotional and mental health difficulties in the future. The greatest benefits were seen where large numbers of families supported the approach together.

For many years now, the Petersfield local area schools (infant, junior, primary and secondary) have been working together to address these concerns. Primary aged pupils are not allowed to bring smartphones to their junior or primary schools and this position also extends to secondary aged students at [The Petersfield School](#). All of our schools encourage families to consider basic 'brick' mobile phones instead, helping young people to continue to enjoy time free from smartphones and social media both at school and at home.

As Headteachers, we support parents who choose to delay giving their child a smartphone until at least **Year 9** (age 14). We believe this gives children more time to develop confidence, friendships, resilience and healthy habits before managing the challenges of social media and constant online access.

This approach works best when families and schools work together. By delaying smartphones as a community, we can reduce social pressure on children and help create healthier childhood experiences for everyone.

To find out more, please visit:

- Smartphone Free Childhood: <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>
- Delay Smartphones: <https://delaysmartphones.org.uk/>
- Childnet Parents & Carers: <https://www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/parents-and-carers/>
- The Anxious Generation: <https://www.anxiousgeneration.com/>

Our children's futures are important to all of us. Together, we can help them grow up safely, confidently and ready for a successful future.

Yours faithfully,

Petersfield Area Local Schools (PALS) Headteachers