



Dear Parents and Carers,

As you may have seen on national media, many schools are reconsidering the role of smartphones and phones in general for younger children. As a group of local feeder schools for the West Bridgford Academy, we have made the collective decision to work towards becoming phone-free schools to match the no phone policy already in place at the West Bridgford School.

We are aware that at our school, many families give smartphones to children on or around their 11th birthday. With this in mind, we would like to give as much notice as possible to let you know about our change in position. Collectively, the feeder schools would like to become **phone-free from September 2026**. However, we understand that some parents appreciate the additional security that children having a phone when walking home provides. Parents could consider using an Airtag or Tile device to track a pupil's progress home. No smartphones are to be brought into school from September 2026.

This decision follows extensive talks between the headteachers, staff and parents about our growing concerns with our pupils' use of Smartphones. By becoming a phone-free group of schools, we are hoping to give the parent community strength in resisting the pressure they face to purchase a smartphone for their child whilst still in Primary School. Research now indicates that age 11-15 is the age group when children are at their most vulnerable to potential negative influences of smartphones. As such, and in line with up-to-date research, we are encouraging all parents to delay giving a smartphone to their child until they are at least 14 years old.

While smartphones can be valuable tools for adults, an increasing body of research highlights the negative impact of smartphones and social media on children's mental health, as well as the potential exposure to harmful and dangerous content. Smartphones:

- Are **highly addictive**, with lasting effects on young and developing brains; use of them prompts a huge dopamine release, leading to a need for constant gratification.
- Have been linked to **poor mental health, depression and low self-esteem**, especially in young teens.
- Expose children to **harmful content**, including pornography, grooming, bullying and material that is not age appropriate. There is also lots of research suggesting a vast increase in online bullying through group messaging apps.
- **Reduce attention spans** – they are changing the way children's brains develop and fundamentally affecting their ability to concentrate.
- **Rob children of their childhood**. Time spent on a device reduces time spent playing, interacting and developing vital social skills. Less time on screens has shown to have a positive effect on behaviour in children and teens across the board.

Our new collective policy predominantly affects children in Years 5 and 6. We understand that many parents value the ability to contact their children, particularly as they become more independent and start walking to and from school. We would encourage parents to teach their children how to safely walk to and from school and what to do in emergency situations. In specialist cases, and in agreement with the headteacher, if you still feel your child needs a mobile phone to be contactable, our schools will only accept simple 'brick phones' on site. These phones must not have the ability to be connected to the internet and will be handed in on arrival and given back at the end of the school day.

We will continue to educate and support children in their understanding of online technologies through our computing and PSHE curriculum offer. Please also find more information about some of the matters raised in this letter using the following links:

<https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk>

<https://delaysmartphones.org.uk>

Yours sincerely, Lynda Noble