



18 June 2025

Dear Parents and Carers of children across Pickwick Academy Trust

**RE: SmartPhone Free Childhood**

I am writing to you to share some information about an important initiative and growing movement across the country which is encouraging parents/carers to support a campaign called the 'Smartphone-free Childhood'.

The campaign aims to promote healthier, more focussed learning environments for our children by reducing their reliance on, and use of, smartphones (phones that are able to access the internet and a range of apps, rather than phones that can only text and make calls).

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 reduced significantly. Whilst smartphones are a helpful piece of technology for adults, they can expose children to significant safeguarding risks in addition to a number of other negative implications, especially when used for many hours a day.

Organisations such as '[the SmartPhone free childhood](#)' and '[Delay SmartPhones.org](#)', and authors such as Professor Jonathan Haidt, in his recent book 'the Anxious Generation' have identified research that suggests the heavy use of smartphones by children can:

- Be highly addictive, with lasting effects on young and developing brains being similar to that of gambling
- Be linked to poor mental health, depression and low-self-esteem, especially in young teenagers
- Expose children to harmful content including pornography, grooming, bullying and material that is not age appropriate
- Reduce attention spans and the ability to focus and concentrate
- Reduce the time available for children to engage in real world situations with others, to play and interact, and to develop vital social and problem-solving skills
- Disrupt sleep patterns leading to fatigue and reduced cognitive functions

These issues and others associated with the use of social media and access to inappropriate online content, have been highlighted in documentaries and programmes such as '[the Social Dilemma](#)' and '[Adolescence](#)' too.

The campaign is encouraging parents/carers to delay giving their children a smartphone until they are at least 14 years old, and delay the use of social media until children are 16 years old.

Campaigners recognise that as children become more independent and begin walking to and from school, parents/carers will want to be able to contact them in an emergency – they advocate the use of 'dumb phones' (phones that can text and call, but cannot access the internet) instead, until children are 14 years old.

For the campaign to be successful, they advocate for parents/carers to act collectively to resist the pressure from children and their peers, and hold back on giving them smartphones until they are 14. In this way, parents/carers would be working together with a wide network of other families to reset the expectation, remove social peer pressure and reduce the potential of FOMO (the fear of missing out).

Many of our families across the Trust have decided to sign up to the 'Parent Pact' to delay giving smartphones to children – if you are interested in finding out more about this and/or want to sign up you can by visiting: <https://parentpact.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>.

If you have already given your child a smartphone and would like some support on how to help them build healthy smartphone habits please click [here](#).

If you would like to discuss any of the above information, please contact your school directly or email [admin@pickwickacademytrust.co.uk](mailto:admin@pickwickacademytrust.co.uk) to arrange a discussion.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Passmore', is enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

James Passmore

Chief Executive Officer

Pickwick Academy Trust

[www.pickwickacademytrust.co.uk](http://www.pickwickacademytrust.co.uk)