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24th September 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

This is a joint letter being sent to all families of primary age children in the Havant and Waterlooville area. We call this our school district.

We are becoming increasingly concerned about the impact of smartphones on our children. Smartphones are a big part of life today. Most adults have one. They are a fantastic tool for finding information and staying connected with family and friends.

However, there is now an alarming amount of evidence and research of the negative effects of smartphones and social media on children and teenagers. These include:

- Poor mental health, such as depression, anxiety and low self-esteem.
- Issues with cyberbullying, attention, focus and sleep.
- Exposure to dangerous and harmful content, and inappropriate material.
- Opportunity cost: Smartphones can be highly addictive, and hours spent on a device reduces time spent playing, interacting and developing vital social skills.

Children often get their first phone in primary school and over 90% of 12-year-olds now have a smartphone. This period is crucial for brain development. **A major study found that the younger a child gets a smartphone, the worse their mental health will be.**

Schools are in a powerful position to change the norm, and support parents on this difficult issue. **That is why most Havant and Waterlooville primary schools are now coming together to take collective action and commit to making Hampshire primary schools genuinely smartphone free.** This is without question, a growing movement that already enjoys the support of so many parents.

We are committed to ensuring our primary schools are smartphone free by January 2026, meaning that we do not want primary school children to bring a smartphone to school.

If you need to contact your child while they travel to and from school, a simple 'brick' phone is more than enough. 'Brick' phones do not have internet connectivity, and they are inexpensive. There are a few phones that look like smartphones but are not. Here are some examples of the more popular non-smart phones:

- Nokia 105
- USHINING Flip Phone
- Oakcastle SIM Free Mobile

We would like to work together with parents to safeguard children and **preserve childhood**. By doing so, we can not only protect our children's mental health and wellbeing, but we can also set a standard for how communities can come together to challenge the norms that no longer serve our children. We are also



Hampshire
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encouraging all parents to delay giving a smartphone to your child until they are at least 14 years old and to delay allowing their children access to social media until age 16.

If you would like to find out more about support for parents who want their children to be smartphone free, do please visit Smartphone Free Childhood. Here you can sign the Parent pact. This allows parents to come together in delaying giving a smartphone to their children, until the end of Year 9.

Our school is also hosting a meeting on Wednesday 8th October at 6:30pm in the Junior School Hall which will be held by one of Smartphone Free Childhood team. We strongly encourage you to come along and find out more.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Livingstone', written over a thin horizontal line.

Mrs Livingstone
Executive Headteacher