



10 February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

Working Together: Supporting a Smartphone-Free Childhood

We are writing to you as a collective group of educators across the Romsey cluster of infant, primary and secondary schools because we share a growing concern about the impact of smartphones on our children and young people.

Current data shows that most children receive their first phone during primary school, and over 90% of 12-year-olds now own a smartphone. As schools we believe we can work together with parents to change this trend and support healthier development for our young people.

The Romsey Partnership of infant, primary and secondary schools is joining many other Hampshire schools in making our schools smartphone-free. We are aligning our policies to ban smartphones and smartwatches for students across all our settings.

Safeguarding Concerns

Smartphones, while incredibly useful, can pose significant risks to the safety and well-being of our students. The unrestricted access to the internet and social media can and does expose children to inappropriate content (often unfiltered and graphic), cyberbullying, and online predators. The increased use of camera functionality has also raised safeguarding concerns, as it can affect young people's self-esteem and body image and often blurs their understanding of what is appropriate and age-appropriate when sharing images. In 2024 the Internet Watch Foundation assessed over 700,000 images and videos as criminal sexual abuse imagery. By limiting smartphone use, we aim to create a safer environment where students can focus on their learning without these potential threats.

Mental Health Concerns

There is growing evidence that excessive smartphone use can negatively impact mental health, particularly among young people. Research increasingly highlights significant risks associated with early smartphone use, including impacts on mental health, sleep disruption, reduced concentration, exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and the development of addictive behaviours. A recent study from Sapien Labs, ["Age of First Smartphone and Mental Wellbeing,"](#) found a direct link between the age at which children receive their first smartphone and their mental health outcomes, with earlier access correlating with poorer wellbeing.

Constant connectivity and social media can lead to anxiety, depression, and a sense of inadequacy. These are conditions that have risen sharply within many schools recently. By reducing smartphone usage, we hope to foster a more positive and focused learning environment, encouraging face-to-face interactions and reducing the pressures associated with an online presence. Schools have also noticed that there has been a significant increase in students asking to go to the toilet during lesson time. Much of this is fuelled by the need for our children to respond to messages/watch social media reels that are being sent to them when they should be focused on their learning.

School Phone Policies

Each school will share its own policies with parents but all are aligned with the banning of smartphones and smart watches in school.

Students who need a mobile phone for safety reasons when travelling to and from school may bring a basic phone that:

- Has no camera functionality
- Has no internet access or apps
- Can make calls and send text messages only

We have identified three suitable models that meet these criteria and will be accepted at school:

- Nokia 105
- Oakcastle F100
- The Phone/The Phone+

These are the only phones suitable for school; any other phone will be considered a prohibited item.

We encourage all parents to:

- Delay giving your child a smartphone for as long as possible
- Consider the amount of time your child spends on screens
- Reduce your own smartphone use on school premises and in front of your children, modelling the behaviour we hope to see from our children
- Support our smartphone-free policies by not providing smartphones or smartwatches to children attending our schools

We recognise that some parents may have concerns about specific needs, such as medical conditions or knowing their child's location for safety. We are happy to discuss individual medical circumstances and can support the use of dedicated Bluetooth tracking devices if needed for peace of mind such as:

- Air tag (apple)
- Galaxy Smart Tag (Samsung)
- Pebblebee (3rd party - works across Android and iOS)

This is about more than just school rules. It's about giving our children the best possible chance to thrive socially, emotionally and academically. Research shows that delaying smartphone access and reducing screen time can have significant positive effects on young people's mental health, relationships, sleep quality and academic performance.

We know this represents a significant shift for many families, but we believe that by working together as a community of schools and parents, we can create a healthier environment for all our children.

For more information or to discuss individual circumstances, please contact us directly. Thank you for your support and partnership in this important initiative.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C J Cox', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mr C J Cox
Headteacher
The Mountbatten School