

**Dear Parents and Carers,**

I'm writing as a fellow parent of primary aged children in Sheffield, and also as a parent who supports [Smartphone Free Childhood](#) — a growing national campaign led by parents, for parents.

Like many of you, I've been thinking a lot about the role of smartphones in our children's lives. We all want to do what's best for our kids, and yet it's not always easy to know when the "right" time is to introduce devices like smartphones. Smartphones weren't designed with kids in mind, but they're reshaping childhood rapidly. On average, kids get their first smartphone aged nine.

This isn't about judging anyone's choices — I know some children already have smartphones, and every family has its own needs and reasons. But there's also growing concern and evidence from parents, teachers, and child development experts and young people themselves about the impact early smartphone use can have on mental health, sleep, friendships, and attention.

It's also not about being anti-tech - technology is amazing, and it is going to be a huge part of our children's lives. But they can learn how to use technology without having a smartphone - which is really a super computer - in their pocket. **The longer we wait to give our children smartphones, the more time they have to learn, grow, play and develop** away from addictive algorithms and the anxiety machine of social media. The average teenager spends 35 hours a week on their smartphone - imagine if that time was spent with friends or family, pursuing a hobby, doing sport, getting more sleep!

That's why I'm inviting you to take a look at the [Parent Pact](#) — a simple, voluntary commitment that brings parents together to support each other in delaying smartphones and social media. **Already, this has been signed by parents covering over 1,700 children in [South Yorkshire](#) across 159 schools. And across the country over 140,000 parents have signed the pact covering over 13,000 schools.**

**The more families that join, the easier it becomes to delay giving our kids smartphones — without children feeling they're the "only one" without a phone.**

You can read more about the pact and sign up here:

<https://southyorkshireparentpact.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>

And you can join the South Yorkshire SFC WhatsApp community for parents who would like to stay informed and connect with other like-minded parents here:

<https://whatsapp.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>

If safety/being able to contact your child when they are in Y6/go to secondary school is a key concern, there are good alternatives:

<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives>

Thanks for taking a moment to consider this. It's not about getting it perfect — just about working together to make thoughtful choices in a fast-changing world.

Warm wishes,

Ruth (SFC volunteer and regional lead for SFC South Yorkshire)