

St. John's Church of England Primary School and Nursery

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Friday 17th October 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the end of our first half term and look ahead to Christmas, many families begin to think about special gifts or milestones for their children, especially for those in Years 5 and 6, who are nearing the transition to secondary school. One common consideration at this stage is whether to give a smartphone as a Christmas or “moving up” gift.

Before making that decision, I'd like to gently invite you to pause and reflect and remind you of a [letter we sent home in May 2025](#). While smartphones are part of modern life, evidence increasingly shows that early smartphone use carries significant risks to children's wellbeing.

Research, and our own experience as a school, highlights growing concerns around cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content, distraction from learning, and mental health impacts. At school we see that the culture of carrying cameras and constant connectivity can also distort self-image and heighten anxiety. These patterns remind us that children's brains are still developing, and the instant, addictive design of platforms can make it difficult for young people to manage screen time and online pressures. Children are particularly vulnerable to the designs aimed at monetising and grabbing their attention.

For families seeking a safe, practical way to stay connected, a simple and safe “brick phone” — one that allows calls and texts but not apps or internet access — can meet communication needs without the associated risks. [Here is helpful guide to these alternatives](#).

Together with other primary schools in the Belper area we are working together to support the Smartphone Free Childhood movement. At the heart of this movement is a commitment to helping children grow up with healthier norms around technology. Many parents of this school and other local primary schools have chosen to sign the [SFC parent pact](#) to help collectively reduce peer pressure around smartphone ownership. As headteachers we are encouraged to see 200+ pacts made by parents at local schools. You can learn more at <http://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org.uk>

Here at St. John's CE Primary School, we are proudly phone free and encourage no smart phone use at home. Our [Mobile Devices In School](#) statement outlines clear guidance designed to safeguard our pupils and support a balanced approach to technology. I encourage all parents to read it carefully.

Together, we can give our children the chance to enjoy their childhood fully — building real-world friendships, curiosity, and resilience, without the potential pressures of digital life.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Yours Sincerely
Mr. Averis
Head Teacher

