

## **The Federations of Beckwithshaw, Kettlesing Felliscliffe and Ripley Endowed CE Primary Schools**

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

In recent months there has been growing awareness of the harmful effects of smartphones on young people's well-being. New research has received extensive media coverage and thousands of parents have joined national campaigns such as Smartphone Free Childhood, in a bid to delay giving smartphones to their children.

There is a growing body of evidence linking smartphone use with an array of harms. Smartphones are correlated with anxiety, depression and loneliness. They are a gateway to extreme content and unwanted communication. Research shows that smartphones affect academic performance and many children show signs of behavioural addiction to their devices.

Underpinning all these harms is one that is potentially the most significant of all. Smartphones are experience blockers, distracting children from engaging in the real world and being 'present' in daily activity – leaving little time for the real world activities and relationships that enable us to learn the essential life skills needed for the transition to adulthood.

It is not surprising that new research shows that the younger a child receives their first smartphone, the worse their mental health. The age children are receiving their first smartphone is getting younger and younger. In the UK, a fifth of 3-4 year olds own their own device and 24% of 5-7 year-olds do.

With the above in mind, we have decided to make our federation 'smartphone free schools' (phones handed in to admins for Y6 children with walking permissions or school buses). This decision has been made to better safeguard the learning environment, ensure the welfare of all students, and uphold the ethos of our school community.

We would also suggest that when on our school playgrounds/courtyards for pick-up, parents and carers refrain from being on their phones unless absolutely necessary as we promote this on school grounds.

We understand that many parents don't want to give their child a smartphone but feel they have no choice because everyone else is. No parent wants to isolate their child from their peer group however we strongly suggest that you choose a 'safe device' - <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/alternatives>.



**BECKWITHSHAW**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL



**KETTLESING FELLISCLIFFE**  
COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



**RIPLEY ENDOWED**  
CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our children's futures are so important, to you and to us. In a world where fast-changing and unregulated technology is impacting the development of our children, it is up to us to educate and make change for their futures.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Kirkman'.

Miss Kirkman

Executive Headteacher