



Phone-Free Primary Schools

July 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

As a group of primary schools working together to support our local community, Belper Cluster Collaboration often jointly investigate and embark upon initiatives intended to have a positive impact for local children. Belper Cluster Collaboration have made the collective decision to become completely 'phone-free' from **1st September 2026**. From this date, children **will not be permitted to bring phones onto school grounds**.

As a community of schools, we are becoming increasingly concerned about the impact of smartphones on children. While smartphones can be valuable tools for adults, an increasing body of research highlights the negative impact of smartphones and social media on children. This is reflected in the Government's announcement of a social media ban for under 16s, statutory legislation prohibiting pupil mobile phones in schools as of 29th June 2026 and Government guidance on screen time for children announced this year.

By becoming a phone-free group of schools, we hope to support parents in resisting pressure to purchase smartphones for children at primary school. Research now indicates that children are most vulnerable to the negative impacts of smartphone use between the ages of 11 and 15 years. As such, we encourage parents to delay giving their child a smartphone until **at least the end of year 9**. There is ongoing research and discussion in secondary schools and within the UK government about smartphone use by children, so this age recommendation may change with time. We encourage parents to stay aware of developments and manage children's expectations accordingly, rather than promising a smartphone by a certain age.

Our phone-free approach from September 2026

From 1st September 2026, children **will not be permitted to bring phones into Pottery Primary school**. We understand that parents may wish to contact their children either before or after school, e.g. if they are travelling independently to and from school. We encourage parents to teach children how to walk safely to and from school and what to do in an emergency. We also urge parents to consider whether having a phone will actually make children safer on this journey, considering the distraction that phones create when children are crossing roads.

This policy applies from the point at which a pupil enters the school grounds until they leave; and during any school activity, trip, fixture or visit, unless specific alternative arrangements have been agreed with the headteacher. If a mobile phone is brought onto the school site without prior express permission, this device will be stored in the main school office, awaiting collection from a parent at their earliest convenience.

There may be some circumstances in which a child is moving from one household to another during the week and need to transfer belongings between them. In these situations this should be communicated with the office and bags containing smart devices can be stored here for pick up by an adult.

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There are also sometimes **exceptional circumstances** that require a child to utilise a smartphone as a medical device, e.g. for diabetes. In these circumstances, please provide school with a letter from your GP if you have not already done so.

Other Digital devices

This smart device free approach will also apply to a range of other devices, such as Meta Glasses, smart watches, GPS trackers etc. Anything that can track location, take photos, communicate or record voices will not be permitted in school. This has been the case for some time but will be reiterated in our new electronic equipment policy and guidance, coming in September 2026.

Why are we taking this step?

Nationally, we are seeing increasing challenges linked to smartphone use. These include concerns around children's safety, wellbeing, attention, sleep, friendships and development. Some of the key concerns include:

- Poor mental health, including anxiety, low mood and low self-esteem.
- Issues linked to cyberbullying, peer pressure and online conflict.
- Reduced attention, focus and quality of sleep.
- Exposure to harmful, inappropriate or upsetting content.
- The addictive nature of smartphones, which can reduce the time children spend playing, talking, reading, being active and developing important social skills.

Children transitioning from primary school to secondary school are at a vital stage in their development. We want to support children to prioritise learning, friendships and real-world social interaction in order to build their social skills, confidence and resilience. We also want to support children in using technology safely, responsibly and at the right time. We believe that a clear and consistent approach across local primary schools will help to reset expectations and support families to make confident, informed decisions around smartphone use.

Supporting families

We recognise that this is a difficult issue for families, particularly when children feel peer pressure. We encourage you to talk as a family about smartphone use, online safety and the boundaries that will best support your child. In this way, smartphones should become viewed as useful devices to facilitate certain tasks in adulthood and **not** as exciting 'toys' or symbols of status or maturity.

You may wish to find out more about the [Smartphone Free Childhood](#) movement and the [Parent Pact](#), which helps parents come together in delaying smartphone use.

Resources for parents to assist in talking to children and others about smartphones can be found on the Smartphone Free Childhood website:

<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/resources-for-parents>

Parents and carers who would like to explore alternatives to smartphones may find this guide to simple phones helpful:

<https://www.generationfocus.org/guide-to-brick-phones/>

As a school, we will continue to educate children and support initiatives to raise awareness around online safety and appropriate use of technology, including during online safety week.

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Thank you for your continued support. By working together as a school, with families and the wider community, we can make a positive difference to children's lives.

Yours sincerely,

Darren Hooley
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Pottery Primary School