

King Athelstan Primary School

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Dear Families,

Smartphones

We would like to update you that, in line with the national agenda, schools in Kingston are working together, with the local authority to consider a different approach to children's use of smartphones, particularly within primary schools. As a result, many schools will become 'smartphone-free' from September.

You are likely aware of the growing concerns and mounting research highlighting the impact of early smartphone use on children's brain development, wellbeing, mental health, and online safety. Key issues being raised include:

- *Impact on mental health such as depression and anxiety*
- *Disrupted sleep and shorter attention spans, impacting on the ability to learn effectively*
- *Risks around online safety*
- *Potential exposure to harmful content and people*

We are also continuing to see increasing incidents in school related to children accessing chat groups on their smartphones, often involving inappropriate language and behaviour. These situations frequently spill over into the school day and require significant staff time to resolve, taking away from valuable learning time.

Parents also often report feeling pressure to purchase a smartphone for their child, even if they would rather avoid this, as it has become the 'new normal'.

We will be writing to you in the autumn term with formal information and a revised policy, in line with discussions at a Local Authority level. However, we wanted to give you advance notice (in light of the summer holidays and some children moving to walking home alone in the new school year) that our policy is likely to change to make King Athelstan 'smartphone free' for children.

If you are thinking about getting your child a smartphone soon, you may want to wait until there's more clarity before making any commitments. A basic mobile (sometimes referred to as a "brick phone") is a good option for contact and safety without internet access. These are relatively inexpensive (approximately £20) and allow children to remain in contact with you while out in the community.

We also kindly ask parents and carers not to use their mobile phones when on the school premises. This is particularly important when coming through the main school gates to drop off and collect your child. We have always asked that parents are not on their phones when greeting their children



but have noticed an increase in this over recent months. Please put your phones away by the time you come through the gates as this helps to foster a warm and present start or end to the school day for everyone.

Please do let us know on this Google Form if there are things that you would like the school to consider. [Smartphone Google Form](#)

Kind regards,

The King Athelstan Team