



Round Hill Primary School
'Dream, believe, achieve together'

- ✓ Reflecting
- ✓ Daring
- ✓ Persevering
- ✓ Dreaming
- ✓ Together

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23rd July 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

Personal Smart Phones Banned from September 2024

Over the last 12 months we have dealt with an ever increasing number of issues due to children's inappropriate use of social media or because they are accessing inappropriate material on certain apps, accessed through their smart phones - these have often been upsetting for those involved.

We have spent a lot of time educating the children around these issues, which is an important part of our curriculum, however dealing with the individual issues is taking an increasing amount of school time. **We really need your support at home to reinforce this message from home too.** Children in primary school should not be accessing several of the apps they are using and in many cases are not mature enough to manage the consequences of these appropriately.

From September, children will NOT be allowed to bring a smart phone or wear a smart watch to school. We hope to limit the issues both in and out of school (such as the racist and homophobic comments as well as incidents of bullying that are being made using WhatsApp groups). We also want to support the parents who choose not to let their child have a smart device yet.

Year 6 children only, who walk home on their own, will be allowed what is widely known as a 'dumb' phone, which allows them to simply make phone calls and receive messages. These are the basic Nokia or Motorola phones that were available prior to smart phones. These can be purchased new for roughly £20, this is a massive saving compared to the price of a new smart phone and will still enable children to be contactable when walking to and from school. (Note: these must still be turned off at all times and not be used on school premises.)

Put simply - to continue to successfully safeguard our children, we are **not permitting** children to bring smart phones to school from September (unless there is a specific medical need, such as diabetes).

We appreciate that it is a parent's right to choose when their child receives a smart phone and many parents have concerns when deciding whether or not to give their children a smart phone – indeed there is also growing evidence which shows that smart phone use in childhood has damaging negative mental and physical effects on long-term health. The recommended time for a child to have a smart phone is **Year 9**.

Some of our parents are joining together in pledging to support a new initiative 'A Smartphone Free Childhood'. We would like to support these parents and most importantly support safeguarding around phones and social media. We will be sending out further information on this initiative and inviting parents to a meeting early in the Autumn Term.

Apps such as WhatsApp, Tiktok and Snapchat, as part of their terms of service, have age restrictions. These are put in place to in order to safeguard children and young teenagers. The children at Round Hill have now all been told a few weeks ago, that they cannot have a WhatsApp account or be part of any WhatsApp Group. If any child is found to breach this, we will report them to the social media company and have their account closed/removed.

I hope that parents/carers will see the benefits of our new approach and support each other, together as a community, to reduce the negative side effects and overuse of smart devices in younger children.

Yours faithfully

Adrian Nash

Head Teacher

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