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Dear Parents/Carers,

As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering a positive and healthy learning environment, we would like to inform you of an important change that will take effect **in September 2025: children will no longer be able to bring 'smartphones' to school at all.**

Currently, there is a national conversation about the appropriate age for children to receive their first smartphone. While technology offers numerous benefits and opportunities, recent research has highlighted a concerning link between the age at which a child gets their first smartphone and mental health issues in young adulthood. (see research <https://sapienlabs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Sapien-Labs-Age-of-First-Smartphone-and-Mental-Wellbeing-Outcomes.pdf>)

We understand that many parents choose to provide their children with smartphones once they start walking to school independently, primarily for safety reasons. However, over the past few years, we have observed a significant increase in problems related to phone use and social media participation among our children. Also, once a child has a smartphone (especially if it is linked to a contract), it can be challenging for parents to retract this decision. Some parents, despite initial reluctance, eventually give in to provide a phone to prevent their child from feeling isolated from their peers.

Recognising these challenges, and **following the new rules set by most secondary schools, including almost all Southwark secondary schools**, we have decided to implement a smartphone-free approach.

1. **Children in Y6 (or in Y5 in special circumstances)** agreed with parents) may bring a phone to school if travelling independently after a mobile phone agreement has been signed by parents at the school office.
2. Pupils are required to hand in their phones at the beginning of each school day.
3. These phones must be pay-as-you-go basic phones (typically called 'brick' phones) without internet access. These phones are both affordable and readily available. For example: <https://www.argos.co.uk/product/3100660>
4. We are **politely asking all parents to not use their phones on the school premises.**

To further discuss this topic, we will be holding a workshop next academic year. This session will provide more information and address any concerns you may have. In the meantime, if you are contemplating getting your child a smartphone, we wanted to give you advance notice of this change.

For more detailed information and resources, please visit the Smartphone Free Childhood website: [Smartphone Free Childhood](https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.com)

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in this matter.

Warm regards,

Jo and the Friars Team

Achieving excellence in a happy, nurturing and safe environment
Compassion, Creativity, Endeavour, Resilience, Respect, Responsibility