Ecclesall Smartphone Free Childhood is excited to announce that our Parent Pacts are now live!

The news is suddenly full of articles showing what parents, carers and teachers have known for some time - that children frequently using smartphones is harmful to them. There's a lot of data to back this up: Smartphone use affects brain development, impacts on children's self-esteem, triggers anxiety and exposes them to harmful content*. Smartphones also prevent children from doing what they should be doing - whether it's playing and chatting with friends and family or just having a bit of down time alone - and this all affects their social development. **But parents have been put in an impossible situation: buy your child a smartphone and expose them to the risks above... or don't, and risk them feeling socially isolated.**

Smartphone Free Childhood believes that the only reason a child needs a smartphone is because everyone else has one. If parents work together, we can change this norm. The more of us who delay giving our child a smartphone, the more parents will feel confident to do the same and the knock-on effect will carry on. Of course, it's a personal decision for each parent and everyone must make the decision which is right for them and their particular family. There are reasons some parents want their child to have a smartphone (for example, if a child has particular health or learning needs) and we're not in any way opposed to this. But for lots of parents, we do have a choice: **It's OK to delay.** And parents all over the country (and the world) are choosing to do just that.

To keep our kids safe, a basic phone is all that children need to keep in touch and stay safe and www.smartphonefreechildhood.com offers information about alternatives to smartphones, including simple location devices that can be used alongside a 'dumb phone'. You can also join the Ecclesall SFC whatsapp group through the website - it's a support group as well as a means of co-ordinating action in our school community.

What if your older child already has a smartphone and you know your younger child will feel it's unfair if they don't have one too? We recommend being open with our children that we're only just starting to learn how harmful smartphones are. If we'd known this earlier, older children wouldn't have been given one. Now we know what we know, we can act differently to protect our children. SFC has gathered numerous case studies from up and down the country indicating that far from feeling resentful at smartphones being taken away, many teenagers are relieved when they can get back to living life without a smartphone and social media.

Parent pacts are being introduced in school communities all over the country, asking parents to pledge to delay buying their kids smartphones, and we're pleased to be part of this wider action. **Last week, a national pact was also launched by Smartphone Free Childhood and 20,000 parents signed up within the first 24hrs of it going live.**

Lots of Ecclesall parents have already signed the pact and we'd love to see lots more of you sign too. In the Ecclesall pact, you can opt to see who else in your child's year has already taken it and there are 2 options to choose from:

1. Delay giving your child a smartphone until at least the age of 14 and delay access to social media to 16; or
2. Delay giving your child a smartphone for the coming year

To access the form, please follow this link:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfonIUHWkphHJsxHGF2UCmzR2-M3d2pcumWamT-ITSdhES0GA/viewform.

To request the form in Microsoft Word format, please message 07941 643152.

At the end of the form, there's a link to the national pact which feeds into live data for the whole country. If you prefer just to sign the national pact, please go to www.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk.

Over 60 Ecclesall parents of children across all year groups from Reception to Year 6 have already signed up. Will you?

Be part of the change 🙂

Ecclesall SFC Group

* See Jonathan Haidt's book, "The Anxious Generation", for more information.