



Dear Parents / carers,

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Thank you to everyone who came along to our online safety meeting last Tuesday. During the meeting, we heard from local parents Holly and Lisa, whose sons tragically lost their lives due to online challenges. Whilst it was difficult to hear, it was an invaluable insight into the dangers posed by the internet and smartphones.

A short video telling their story was shared in the meeting and can be viewed by clicking [here](#). It is an emotive video and for adults only. The slides from the evening are also available [here](#).

### Smartphones at West Leigh

The presentation from Holly and Lisa highlighted a growing problem in our children's lives – smartphones. This generation are being exposed to the dangers of the internet and the algorithms of social media companies to a dangerous extent and at an age when their brains are still developing. There is overwhelming evidence emerging of their detrimental impact on mental health, sleep, relationships, concentration and attention span. Smartphones have been described as the public health crisis of our time.

As a school, we have a duty of care to encourage positive habits and lifestyles and this includes the responsible use of technology. As a result, we have made a decision: **from September 2025, West Leigh Junior School will be a smartphone free school**. From Year 5, children will still be able to bring a phone to school if necessary, but it cannot be a smartphone. They must not be internet enabled and must only be able to make phone calls and send text messages. Examples of such phones can be found [here](#). Currently ASDA sells an [internet free SIM plan](#) for £4 a month which includes unlimited minutes and texts.

The response from parents in last week's meeting was overwhelmingly positive and I am grateful for your support. The intention of this decision is to make it easier for parents to say no to their child's requests for a smart phone without feeling like their child will be the only one missing out. We want to create a culture within the school community whereby parents feel comfortable and confident to delay giving smart phones until their children are better able to cope with the challenges they present. In our view this is not in primary school.

In addition, we would like to encourage you to sign up to the Parent Pact on the Smartphone Free Childhood website which can be found [here](#). By registering on the website, you add the weight of your voice to the belief that we should be delaying the introduction of smartphones and making it easier as a parent community to make this difficult but important decision for our children.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards,

Mr M Aggus

Principal

