



10th September 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Smartphone Free Childhood – Information Evening for Parents

Further to our letter in July, we are writing with further details of an important information evening for parents of the Hedge End cluster of schools. This will be held on the evening of **Thursday 18th September at 6pm** at Berrywood Primary School.

Clare Fernyhough is a parent herself and began the Smartphone Free Childhood campaign when her own children reached upper Key Stage 2 and she was faced with the decision as to whether they should have a Smartphone. What began as a parent Whatsapp chat, has grown beyond what she could have imagined and she is now working alongside paediatricians and mental health specialists to really understand the research linking the rising number of young people with significant mental health challenges to early smartphone use.

Clare will be presenting the research to us so that we can better understand the impact of our children having Smartphones and to enable parents to make an informed decision. She will be on hand to answer any questions that you may have and to share her experiences with you.

We would like to work together with parents to safeguard children and preserve childhood. By doing so, we can not only protect our children's mental health and wellbeing, but we can also set a standard for how communities can come together to challenge the norms that no longer serve our children. We are also encouraging all parents to delay giving a smartphone to your child until they are at least 14 years old and to delay allowing their children access to social media until age 16.

As Headteachers and educators we are all increasingly concerned about the rising number of children in our schools who are experiencing challenges with their mental health and we are in support of this campaign in order to protect them from the very real safeguarding risks involved with young children having access to these super computers in their hands, every day.

In the Hedge End cluster, **collectively we are committed to making our primary schools completely smartphone free by September 2026**. In the meantime, we will work together as school leaders to ensure our policy documents securely reflect this change.

If you would like to find out more please come along – there is no need to book, just turn up on the day.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher