



Oatlands Junior School Smartphone Survey March 2025 – Results

Dear parents and carers,

A huge thank you to everyone who completed the survey in March. We had a great response, with 104 responses distributed fairly equally across the year groups.

What we're sharing today

We are sharing the survey question results below. In addition to the survey questions, 47 people left additional comments, which we have summarised, showing how strongly parents/carers feel about this subject, and that there is no right or wrong nor a 'one size fits all' approach.

A reminder about why we're doing this

With this in mind, we'd like to reiterate that the survey's main objective was to gather views across all year groups and open up a conversation. While our children are at school together, we naturally form a community and do not live in isolation; our children will influence and be influenced by their peers.

We are very aware that smartphone-use is a family's private decision and that any initiatives are entirely voluntary. Also, we 100% recognise that, as parents / carers bringing up children in the age of smartphones and social media, we're all doing our best in a fast-changing world we didn't grow up in.

Smartphones are now a part of everyday life; we are not trying to deny this. Our hope is that we can educate ourselves about the risks, support each other in ensuring our children have a healthy and age-appropriate relationship with smartphones, and ensure that anyone who would like to delay giving their child a smartphone, feels able and supported to do so.

Overall smartphone ownership

- 87% of respondent's children do not currently own a smartphone, 3% own a non-smart / simple phone, 8% own a smartphone with parental controls, and 2% own a smartphone.

How's it going – with smartphones (10 responses)

- Children who have smartphones are using their smartphone for: Communication (100%), Education (50%), Utilities (50%), Entertainment (30%), Social Media (20%) and other activities such as creative writing & photography (10%).

- On Social Media, WhatsApp was the most widely used Social Media app (70%), with YouTube (40%), Kids YouTube (40%), TikTok (20%) and Pinterest (10%) also being used. 10% used no Social Media apps at all (including WhatsApp).
- In response to a question about any problems experienced relating to smartphones, 80% reported no negative impacts, 20% decreased interest in hobbies, 10% tiredness / lack of sleep, and 10% decreased ability to focus on schoolwork.

How it's going – without smartphones (94 responses)

- Where children do not have smartphones, 67% of parents / carers are currently not feeling pressure to get their child a smartphone (with many respondents commenting that they have laid out clear expectations regarding smartphone ownership age which has been helpful), with the remaining 33% of parents currently feeling pressure to get their child a smartphone (across all year groups but particularly in Years 5 and 6).
- When parents / carers are planning to get their child a smartphone:
 - Year 5 (3%)
 - Year 6 (13%)
 - Year 7 (15%)
 - Year 8 (3%)
 - Year 9 (13%)
 - Year 10 (11%)
 - Year 11 (2%)
 - Year 12 (4%)
 - Undecided (30%)
 - As late as possible (5%)
- A large majority of parents / carers – 80% – said they'd choose a non-smart / simple phone as a first step if others in their peer group did too, with 14% saying 'maybe', and 6% saying 'no' (as mentioned in the survey, sales of non-smart / simple phones doubled in 2024, and some good new options have recently come on the market. Please see link for examples [smartphone alternatives](#))
- In response to the idea of a voluntary pact between parents / carers to wait to get children smartphones until Year 9: 42% of parents have already signed the pact, 47% would like to know more, 9% are not interested in a pact, and 2% are undecided.

The pact takes 30 seconds to sign and 137,000+ Parent Pacts have been signed since launch in September 2024, including 115 Parent Pacts for Oatlands Infants and Juniors. We encourage anyone who would like to do so to sign the pact [Smartphone Free Childhood Parent Pact](#)

Please note, this pact would be a statement of intent - nobody will be held to it if they change their mind at a later date. Also, the pact does not include non-smart / simple phones which parents / carers may feel are useful when children start walking to and from school and can be paired with Apple Air Tags if needed.

Comments Summary

- Many parents / carers expressed worries about the addictive nature of smartphones and potential for negative impact on children's mental health (with social media a key issue here).
- There were calls for increased education for both parents / carers and children about smartphones and social media – with understanding the pros and cons seen as essential for managing technology in family life.
- Several comments highlighted the peer influence children / families feel about smartphone ownership, especially as children transition to secondary school. This peer influence complicates decisions amid concerns over children "missing out" as parts of children's social lives move online.
- Acting collectively was seen as a way of dealing with the above – as well as the SFC parent pact, one parent highlighted a successful example of her Year 7 child and two close friends starting high school last September with non-smart / simple phones.
- Many parents / carers appreciate the safety aspect of smartphones, as they allow for communication and tracking when children are walking to and from school. Alongside this, there were examples of parents choosing non smart / simple phones for walking to and from school.
- Challenges with older sibling's smartphone use were highlighted along with dealing with the expectation that younger siblings will get smartphones at the same age as the older sibling/s did.
- There is a desire for schools to implement stricter policies regarding smartphone use, including effective bans during school hours (which is already the case at Oatland Juniors School where any phones are handed in at the beginning of the day and handed back at the end of the day).
- Schools are seen as being able to play a crucial role – alongside parents / carers, the government and technology companies – on this issue.
- A broader concern around screens and education technology in schools was raised.
- There were positive comments about smartphone ownership with a parent highlighting the value of communication, tracking, information and family entertainment their child has gained from having a smartphone.
- Where children do own smartphones, parents / carers emphasised the importance of setting clear boundaries, monitoring, and parental controls.
- Parent / carers were encouraged to consider the example they are setting their children through their own phone usage!

Next steps

Given the interest in education and support on this topic, the school is exploring the following:

- Event for parents / carers with an Online Safety Expert (external provider)
- KS2 workshops for pupils on the topic of achieving a healthy balance with technology (external provider)

These events will likely take place in the new school year given the busy summer term ahead.

For anyone who would like to learn more about Smartphone Free Childhood, we will have a stall in the Community Section at the Oatlands Summer Fair on Saturday 14th June.

We will also be holding informal drinks from 7.30pm at Roosters on Wednesday 16th July – all welcome.

Finally, we have listed some (hopefully) useful resources at the end of this document.

THANK YOU again for your engagement on this important topic.

Best wishes,

The Oatlands Smartphone Free Childhood Group*

** Everyone is welcome, please do feel free to join [Oatlands Infants and Juniors SFC WhatsApp Group](#) (and yes, the irony of a WhatsApp Group is not lost on us!)*

Resources

*Guidance and support for parents / carers**

[Internet Matters - Keep Children Safe Online: Information, advice, support](#)

[UK Safer Internet Centre - Helping children and young people stay safe online](#)

[Common Sense Media - Age-Based Media Reviews for Families](#) (covers apps & games as well as films, TV and books)

[Dr Rangan Chatterjee X Smartphone Free Childhood - 10 tips for parents](#) (whether your child has a smartphone already, or you're feeling the pressure to get them one)

**Additional links available on OJS's online safety page [Oatlands Junior School - Red Kite Learning Trust - Online Safety at Oatlands](#)*

Documentaries

[Swiped: The School That Banned Smartphones | Channel 4](#)

[The Social Dilemma | Netflix](#)

Books

[The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt](#)

[The Healthy Selfie: How to like yourself in the digital age by Dr Susie Davies](#)

[Stolen Focus by Johann Hari](#)

Podcast

[Smartphones & Mental Health with Jonathan Haidt / Feel Better, Live More Podcast Dr Rangan Chatterjee](#)

Other

[Girlguiding - Girls Attitudes Survey 2024.pdf](#)

About Smartphone Free Childhood

[Smartphone Free Childhood Website](#)

[Smartphone Free Childhood - FAQs](#) (understanding the movement, tech & future readiness concerns, safety & parental concerns, social life & emotional wellbeing, school policies & enforcement, special situations & exceptions)

[Smartphone Free Childhood Parent Pact](#) and [Smartphone Free Childhood Parent Pact Results](#) (by region and school)