

Results of the Devon Smartphone Free Childhood Survey

This informal report covers our findings from data captured from Newton Poppleford Primary School. The results are up to date as of 23 October 2024.



Summary of key points



- 127 parents from Little Popples Pre-school and Newton Poppleford Primary School showed their concern about the effects of smartphone ownership and social media access on their children, by participating in this survey.
- 91% of parents would support a parent pact to delay giving their child a smartphone until at least age 11 when they start secondary school.
- 63% of parents would support a parent pact to delay giving their child a smartphone until at least age 14.
- But, some parents think introducing phones for secondary school is important for safety and communication reasons. They also agree that limiting exposure to social media until later is a priority.
- In addition to the parent pact, parents would like to learn more about the potential effects of smartphones and social media on children, by both children learning this directly in the classroom and the school offering guidance to parents such as information and events.

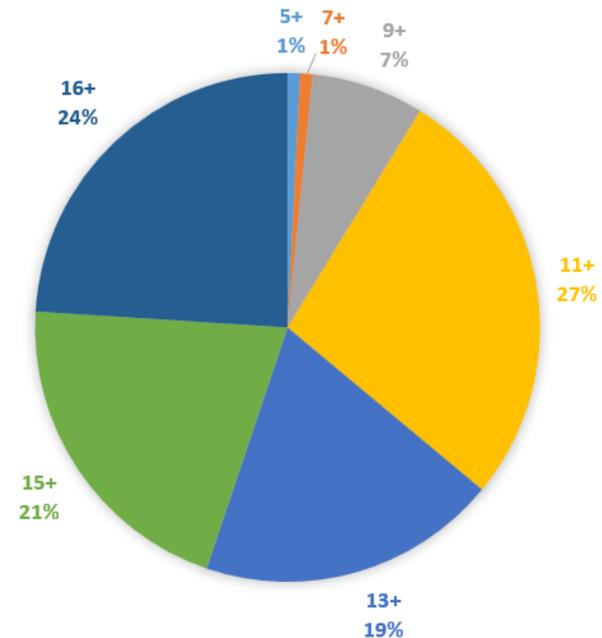
Delay in giving a child a smartphone

91% of parents in our school want to delay giving their child a smartphone until at least age 11 when they start secondary school.



An overwhelming majority of parents at our school think children shouldn't have smartphones until they are 11. Of these, 64% think children should be at least 13. However, parents did report feeling social pressure to provide children with smartphones.

WHAT AGE DO YOU THINK CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE A SMARTPHONE?



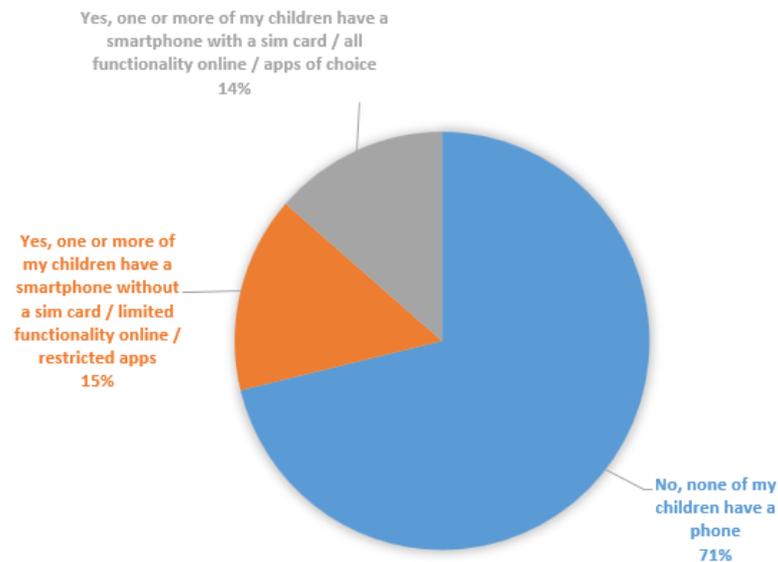
Children's current access

127 parents/carers answered the Smartphone Free Childhood Survey, representing a good mix from all year groups.

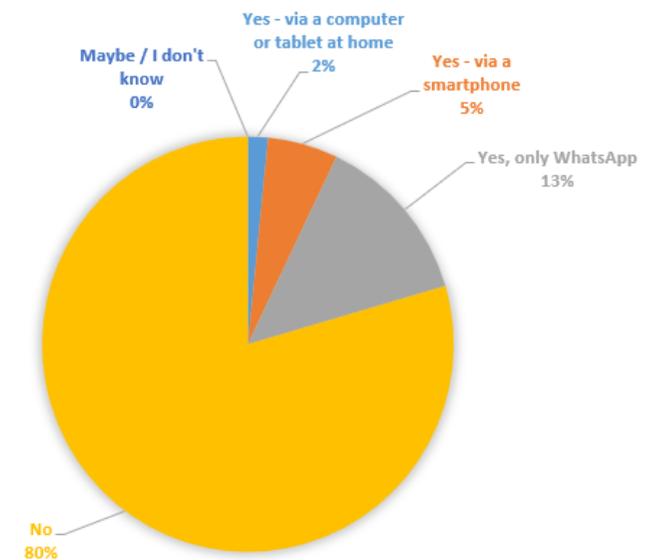
- Of these parents, 29% have a child who owns a phone
- 18 have a child on social media (including WhatsApp)



DO ANY OF YOUR CHILDREN HAVE A PHONE - SMART OR 'BRICK/DUMB/RETRO'?



DO YOUR CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA? (EG. TIKTOK, INSTAGRAM, X, TWITTER, FACEBOOK, WHATSAPP)



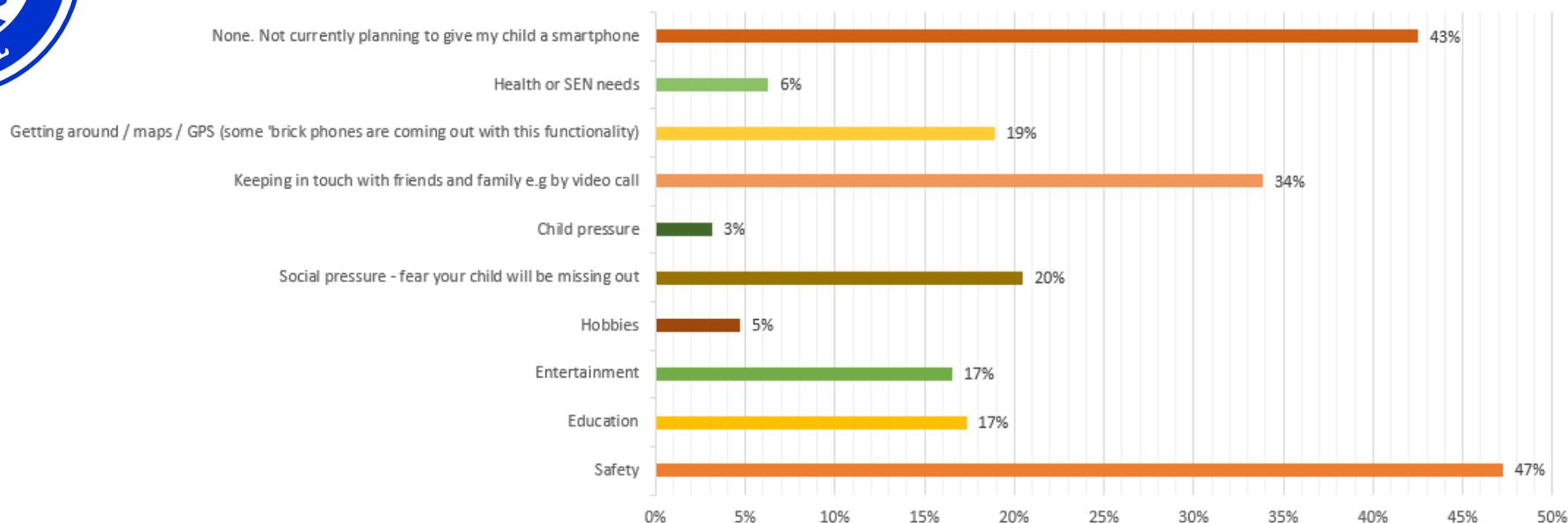
Reasons for giving a smartphone

Safety and communication are the core driving motivations for parents giving their child a smartphone.

- 47% of parents told us that safety is their main motivation, and 34% said keeping in touch with friends and family.



What are your motivations for giving your child a smartphone?



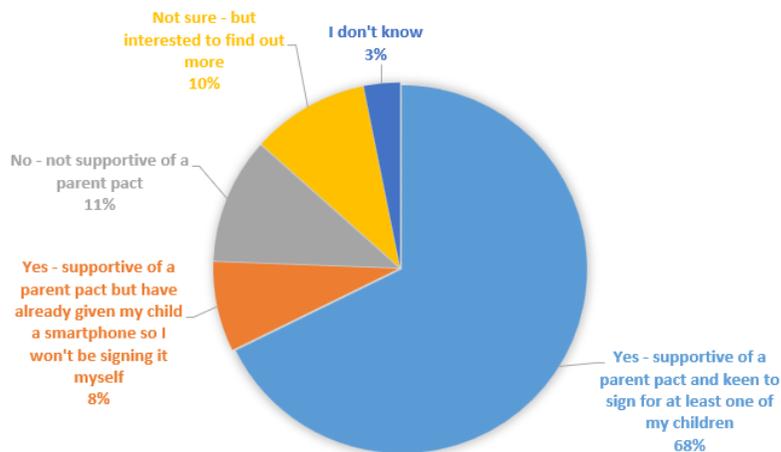
Reasons for giving a smartphone

Most parents surveyed (68%) would support a parent pact to delay giving their child a smartphone until age 14.

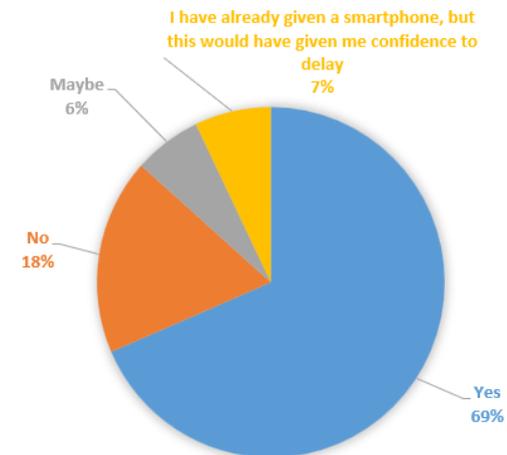
- 69% of parents said that knowing other parents would also delay smartphones and give their child a 'brick' phone instead would give them more confidence to delay, indicating a potential positive effect of having a parent pact in place.
- 25% were either not in support of the parent pact (until age 14) or had already given their child a smartphone before this age.



WOULD YOU BE SUPPORTIVE OF A VOLUNTARY PACT FOR PARENTS TO WITHHOLD SMARTPHONES FROM CHILDREN – AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, EVERYWHERE – UNTIL THEY ARE AT LEAST 14?



IF YOU KNEW OTHER PARENTS WHO WERE GOING TO DELAY GIVING SMARTPHONES TO THEIR CHILDREN AND GIVE THEM A "BRICK" PHONE INSTEAD, WOULD THIS GIVE YOU MORE CONFIDENCE TO DELAY AS WELL?



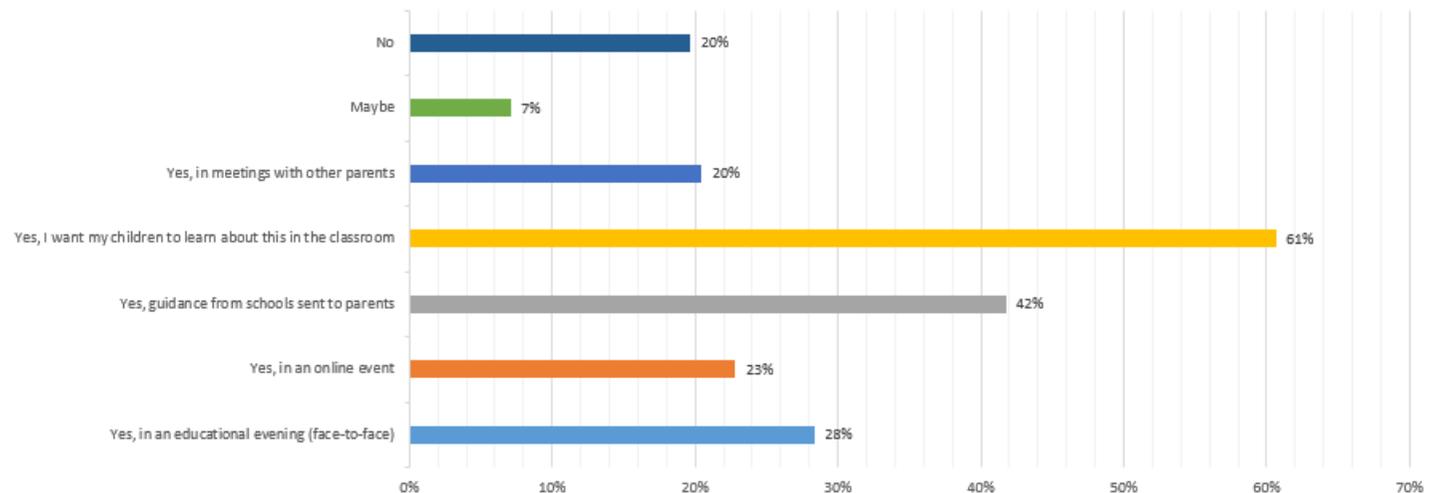
Need for additional guidance

Parents would like to see guidance from school around risks & teaching appropriate use of smartphones.

- There is a strong appetite for education and guidance around using smartphones appropriately.
- 67% of parents would like their child to learn about this in the classroom
- 37% would like to receive guidance from the school on the topic
- Attending either an educational evening in person or online were also fairly popular ideas (31% and 29% respectively)



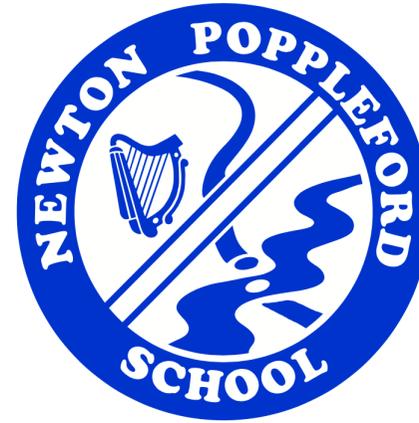
Would you like to learn more about the potential effects of smartphones and social media on children? And how?



Anonymous quote from parents



- ⇒ *I so worried about the pressure to provide my children with smartphones and really don't want to. Any support externally would be great.*
- ⇒ *I think it's common sense to realise that giving your child a mobile phone will stop them from passing their time in healthier ways, but once other children start getting them, they will feel left out. A pact would allow children to remain children for longer and this can only be good for their physical and mental health.*
- ⇒ *I am really concerned about children accessing social media and having unlimited access to the web. I want my child to be able to have breaks from social environments and a screen.*
- ⇒ *I am very worried about my child having one and hope with the support of parents it can be prevented. I read a book "The Anxious Generation" which I feel all parents would benefit from reading.*
- ⇒ *Delaying the pressures of smartphones and social media extends their childhood.*
- ⇒ *Social media is a known catalyst for young people to become depressed and an un-monitored medium to allow bullying to occur. When viewed with suicide statistics, most noticed in girls, then the access to phones should be a universal no. Childhood is a complex period where understanding rules and freedom are tricky enough, to actively remove innocence by bowing to peer pressure and poor parenting is not something to celebrate.*
- ⇒ *Brick phone much preferred for as long as possible!*



Thank you.

For any questions, please contact either Georgia Trengove, Amy Sweet, Joy Petly,
Mikyla Tribble.