Letter to Families

Dear Families,

Across the country, the conversation around smartphones and childhood is changing rapidly. New national guidance and increasing parliamentary focus around the use of smartphones in schools has made it clear that schools are being directed to ensure smartphones are not used during the school day and are not accessible to children whilst on school sites. Alongside this, Ofsted and safeguarding expectations continue to evolve in response to the very real challenges that technology and social media now present for children, families and professionals alike.

As schools, this is not a conversation we have entered into lightly, nor is it simply about "banning phones." Instead, as a community, we are choosing to embrace this change because we genuinely believe it is the right thing to do for our children and young people. That is why schools across Solihull, alongside community organisations, charities, youth providers, health services and groups supporting children and families, are coming together as part of the Solihull IRL movement.

IRL stands for "In Real Life" because we believe smartphones can wait, but childhoods cannot.

As parents, schools and communities, we are all navigating a world that has changed dramatically over the last decade. Technology companies and social media platforms have created enormous challenges around children's mental health, concentration, sleep, relationships, online safety and safeguarding. Many of us are also seeing children spending less time outdoors, less time with friends face to face and less time engaging in the real-world experiences that are so important for healthy development and happy childhoods.

The Solihull IRL campaign is not about blame, collectively we are all struggling to keep up. We also know that parenting, teaching or supporting children and young people in the digital age is incredibly difficult and that many of us are learning as we go. This movement is about working together as a community to create healthier, safer and more balanced childhoods for our children and young people, whilst supporting one another along the way.

Letter to Families

The Solihull IRL website contains information, guidance and practical support for parents, carers, schools and young people themselves. It explores the impact smartphones and social

media can have on children's wellbeing, learning, attention, sleep, relationships and safety, whilst also sharing positive local opportunities, activities and support available across Solihull. Most importantly, it highlights how we can all work together to ensure children and young people experience the childhood they deserve — one built around connection, confidence, play, relationships and real-life experiences.

As a proud Solihull IRL partner, we will also be sharing more information with you shortly about what this will look like within our own setting, any changes that may happen over time and how we will continue to support children, young people and families throughout this journey.

We are incredibly proud that Solihull schools and organisations are choosing to stand together on this issue and we thank you for your continued support as we work together to support healthier childhoods for all.

Warmest Regards

Windy Arbor Primary School

Head Teacher – Mrs J Curry

Scan here to explore resources, support, local activities and practical tools and to see how the Solihull community is coming together through Solihull IRL to support safer, healthier childhoods beyond smartphones.