



# Burford School & Nursery

*'Enjoy, Achieve, Succeed Together'*

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Dear Burford families,

As we approach the end of the year, many families begin to think about special gifts or milestones for their children, especially for those in Years 5 and 6, who are nearing the transition to secondary school. One common consideration at this stage is whether to give a smartphone as a Christmas or 'moving up' gift. Before making that decision, I'd like to gently invite you to pause and reflect. While smartphones are part of modern life, evidence increasingly shows that early smartphone use carries significant risks to children's wellbeing.

Research, and our own experience as a school, highlights growing concerns around cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content, distraction from learning and mental health impacts. At school, we see that the culture of carrying cameras and constant connectivity can also distort self-image and heighten anxiety. These patterns remind us that children's brains are still developing and the instant, addictive design of platforms can make it difficult for young people to manage screen time and online pressures. Children are particularly vulnerable to the designs aimed at monetising and grabbing their attention.

For families seeking a safe, practical way to stay connected, a simple and safe "brick phone" — one that allows calls and texts but not apps or internet access — can meet communication needs without the associated risks. [Here](#) is a helpful guide to these alternatives.

Together, with other primary schools in the Marlow area, we are working together to support the Smartphone Free Childhood movement. At the heart of this movement is a commitment to helping children grow up with healthier norms around technology. Many parents of this school and other local primary schools have chosen to sign the SFC parent pact to help collectively reduce peer pressure around smartphone ownership.

As Headteachers, we are encouraged to see over [3000](#) pacts made by parents in Buckinghamshire and over 300 in Marlow, a number that we expect to grow as parents learn more about the risks. You can learn more on the [Smartphone Free Childhood](#) site.



Here at Burford, we are proudly phasing out smartphones in school, with the current Year 6 the only year left allowed to bring these devices into school which are securely locked away until home time.

Together, we can give our children the chance to enjoy their childhood fully — building real-world friendships, curiosity and resilience, without the potential pressures of digital life.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Marshall  
Headteacher

