

13th June 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

At Alsop High School, we believe in achieving excellence together: that means working as a strong community. One of the challenges many of us face today is managing smartphone use, especially with our children. It's challenging for any one parent or teacher or child to act alone, which is why we're taking steps to work as a community become a phone-free school.

I do want to stress from the outset that this is not about punishment: it's about giving our students the best chance to develop into confident, well-rounded individuals in a supportive environment. I also want to stress that we are seeing this as the first step towards ensuring we enforce strictly our current policy of "never seen, never heard" from Monday 16th June. However, we believe we need to continue to investigate further strategies such as phone pouches and there will be regular communication with you and the students about this.

This decision is based on growing research, including Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation*, which highlights how smartphones and social media have impacted young people's mental health since around 2012. Increased screen time has been linked to anxiety, sleep issues, loneliness, and lower academic engagement, especially among teens.

We're seeing this in schools too: shorter attention spans, more social drama, and less face-to-face interaction. Even just having a phone nearby can reduce focus and memory. We want school to be a place where our children can grow, connect, and thrive, without constant digital distractions.

We know this isn't simple. We also set online homework, and we're thinking carefully about how to balance that. For now, we'll be clearer about how long homework should take, and we recommend avoiding screens for at least 90 minutes before bedtime.

Mr Mee and I would be happy to hold a parental drop in and 'Meet the Headteacher' coffee session on Thursday 3rd July to discuss this, or any other issues you have regarding your child's education at Alsop. We would love to hear your thoughts and outline our next steps. We're excited about what we can achieve together. We will send out a Microsoft Form with a reply slip to complete if you would like to attend this drop-in.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J Kerfoot
Executive Principal