Here is all the info and relevant links from the smartphone free group.

💫 \*Once in five-year opportunity to be heard\* 💫

 🌟 \*This survey closes on Sunday!\*

🌟We have a great opportunity to influence decision making of West Sussex Public Health, on the issue of smartphones in schools, by sharing our collective parental voice 🌟

Once every five years, the council makes a plan about how they intend to support the health and wellbeing of West Sussex residents.  Their draft plan has been published, and it includes children's mental health, as one of its five priorities, which is really positive, but neither schools, nor smartphones are mentioned in the plan 😔

We know that schools \*urgently need\* to become  places free from smartphones to protect our children's mental health, so please consider taking this opportunity to share your views on smartphones in schools, and comment on the councils plan in the survey link  \*We won't be asked again until 2030\*🥺

 Who knows, if several hundred people ask for Smartphones to be removed from schools, this could be the start of a countywide smartphone free schools policy for West Sussex 🎉👏🤞

We have drafted comments that you can include if you wish to support this direction of travel.

\*Please also share the survey\* with any young people who have been impacted by smartphones in schools, and are happy to complete the survey.

<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/jlhws/surveys/joint-local-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2025-2030-public-consultation>

\*Questions 1, 4 & 5,\* you can just put \*No Comment\*👍

\*Question 2\* you can put this 👇

Encouraging parents to delay giving their child a smartphone until they are at least 14, and delay access to social media until they are at least 16, through a public health campaign.

\*Question 3 you can put this \*

As a parent, and a member of Smartphone Free Childhood West Sussex,  <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>   I was delighted to see that “Transitioning to adulthood – children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing” is one of the five priorities in  the draft  Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JLHWS).  However, it is also my view that the JLHSW  does not go nearly far enough to meet the health and wellbeing needs identified in the ‘Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2024’, or sufficiently respond to the depth and breadth of online harms that are impacting our children, and are clearly cited in the ‘Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022/2023 Children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing in a changing world’, in the chapter “Navigating a Digital World". It is my view that the JLHWS needs to go much further, and explicitly respond to the evidence presented herein,  by urgently setting  the  strategic direction for all Primary and Secondary schools, across West Sussex, to become places that are free from smartphones.

I would urge comprehensive and collective action to reduce digital harms including:

1. Enabling all schools to become places that are free from smartphones,  by engaging parents and working in partnership with expert organisations, such as  Smartphone Free Childhood, to implement 'simple phone policies' (ie no smartphones permitted on school premises,  only 'simple phones', with No Data SIMS),

2. Encouraging parents to delay giving their child a smartphone until they are at least 14, and delay access to social media until they are at least 16, through a public health campaign.

3. Continuing to reduce online harms, for children who have smartphones already, working in partnership with expert organisations such as PAPAYA.

 <https://www.papayaparents.com/>

A 'simple phone policy' for Primary schools, and the entry point of Secondary schools (incoming Year 7 pupils), sets the precedent for later years.  Some schools in West Sussex are already moving towards 'simple phone policies' for younger years, and rolling them up through the secondary years, but it is my view that the Health and Wellbeing  Board (HWB) should urgently set the strategic direction of school leaderships teams to accelerate this  change  and to protect the health and wellbeing of young people across West Sussex.

This is not about the HWB telling schools, or parents what to do, it is about the HWB taking necessary, and urgent, action to prevent mental ill-health in young people.

Suggested goals and measures for delivery:

\*Year 1\*

\*All Primary and Secondary schools\* will have engaged parents on the issue (ie via information sharing, and/or surveying)

\*All Primary schools\* will have implemented a 'simple phone policy'.

\*All Secondary schools\* will have implemented a 'simple phone policy' for incoming Year 7 pupils.

\*50% of Secondary schools\* will have implemented genuinely smartphone free phone policies for existing pupils, across Years 8 –  11 (ie the school requires smartphones to be in lockers,  Yondr pouches, or similar, for the duration of the day, or they only permit simple phones).

\*Years 2 - 5\*

\*All Secondary schools\* will have implemented genuinely smartphone free phone policies for existing pupils, and will continue to implement a phased approach to going fully smartphone free, with incoming Year 7 pupils following a 'simple phone policy' for the remainder of their time in secondary education.