

Results of the Devon Smartphone Free Childhood Survey



*This informal report covers our findings from data captured from St Peter's Church of England Primary School in Budleigh Salterton.
The results are up to date as of 19 June 2024.*

*If you have any questions, please contact Claire Jones on
claireabjones@gmail.com.*

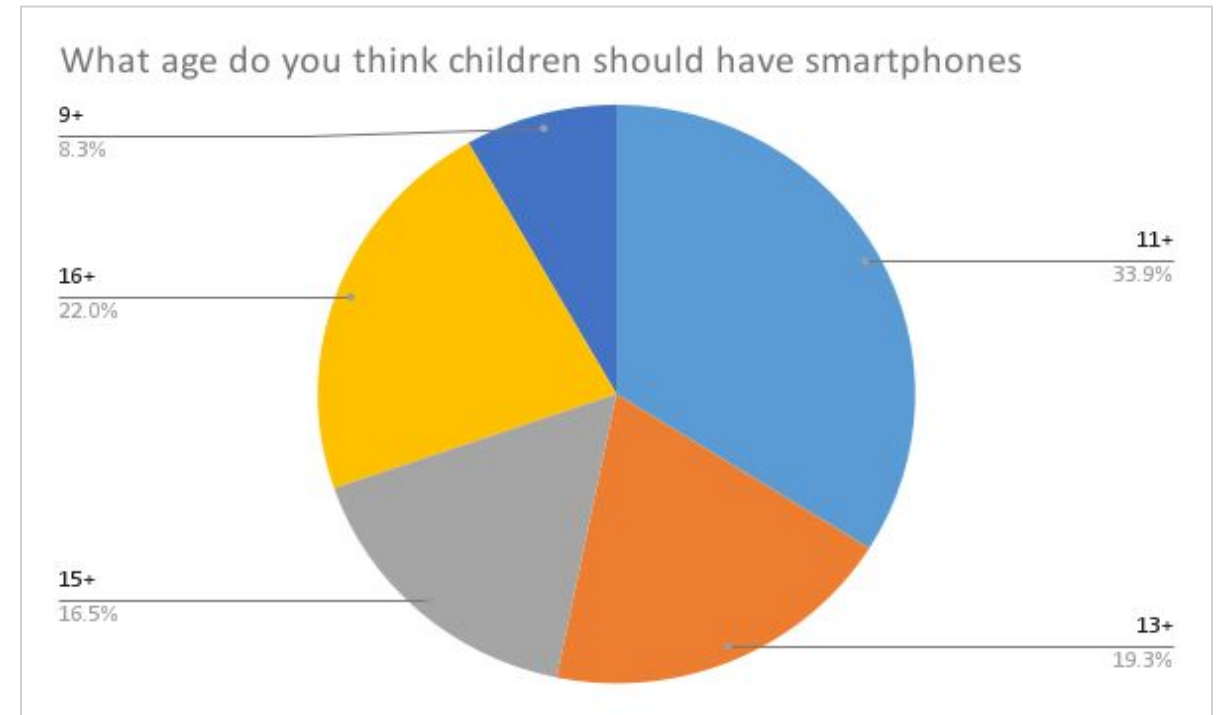
Summary of key points

- Parents are concerned about the effects of smartphone ownership and social media access on their children.
- Almost all parents (92%) in our school want to delay giving their child a smartphone until at least age 11 when they start secondary school.
- 64% of parents would support a parent pact to delay giving their child a smartphone until 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.

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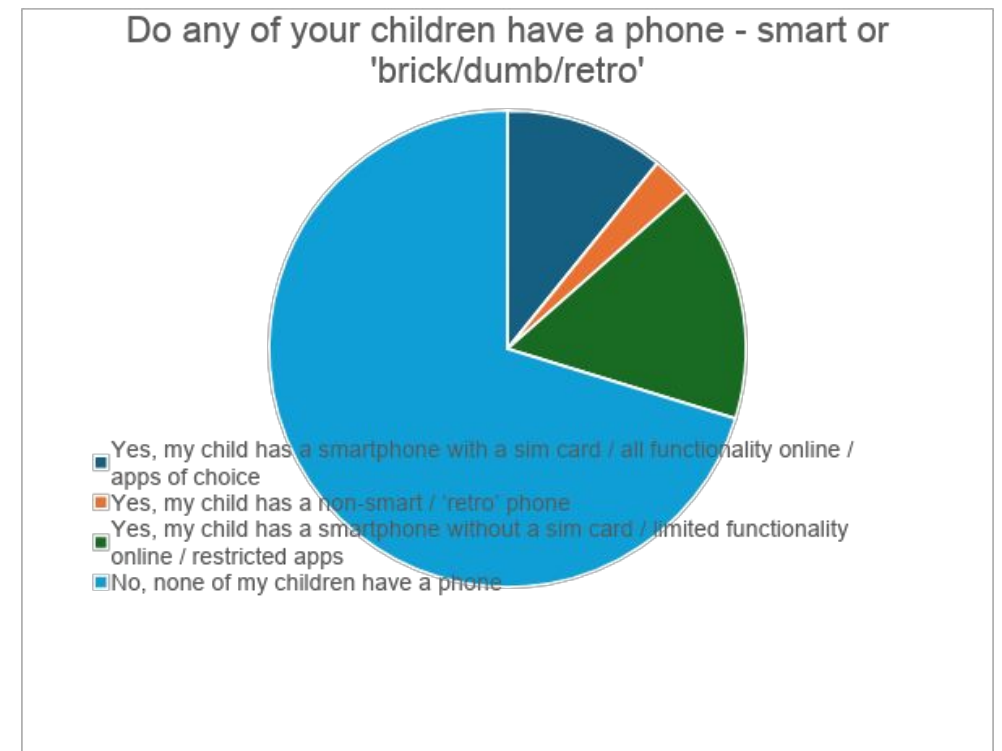
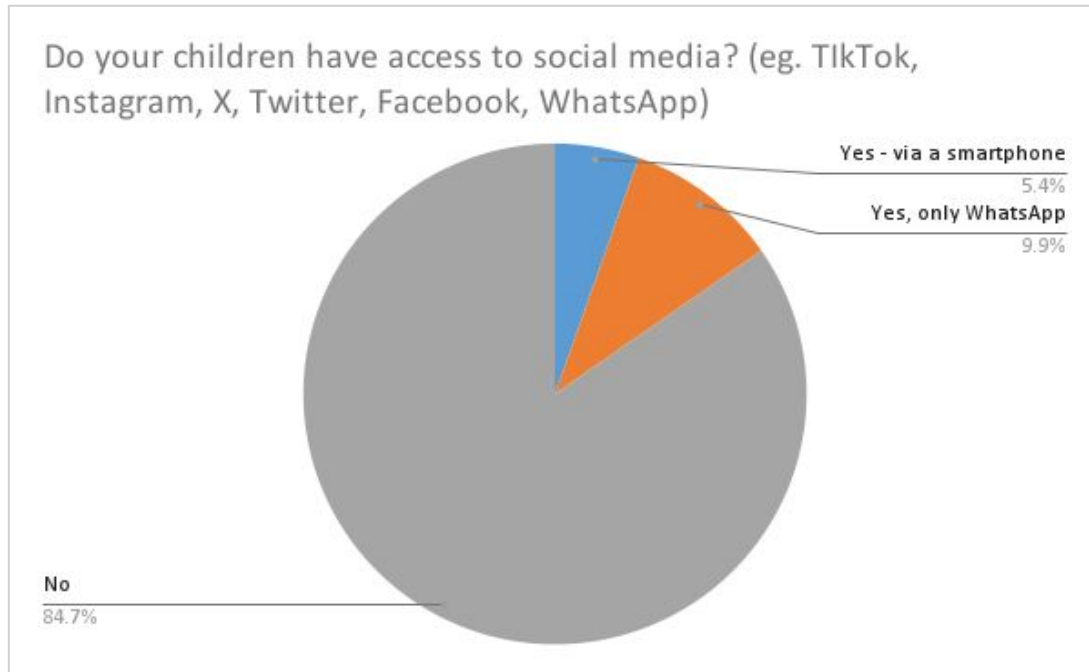
An overwhelming majority of parents at our school think children shouldn't have smartphones until they are 11. Of these, 57.8% think children should be at least 13.

However, parents did report feeling social pressure to provide children with smartphones in year 6.



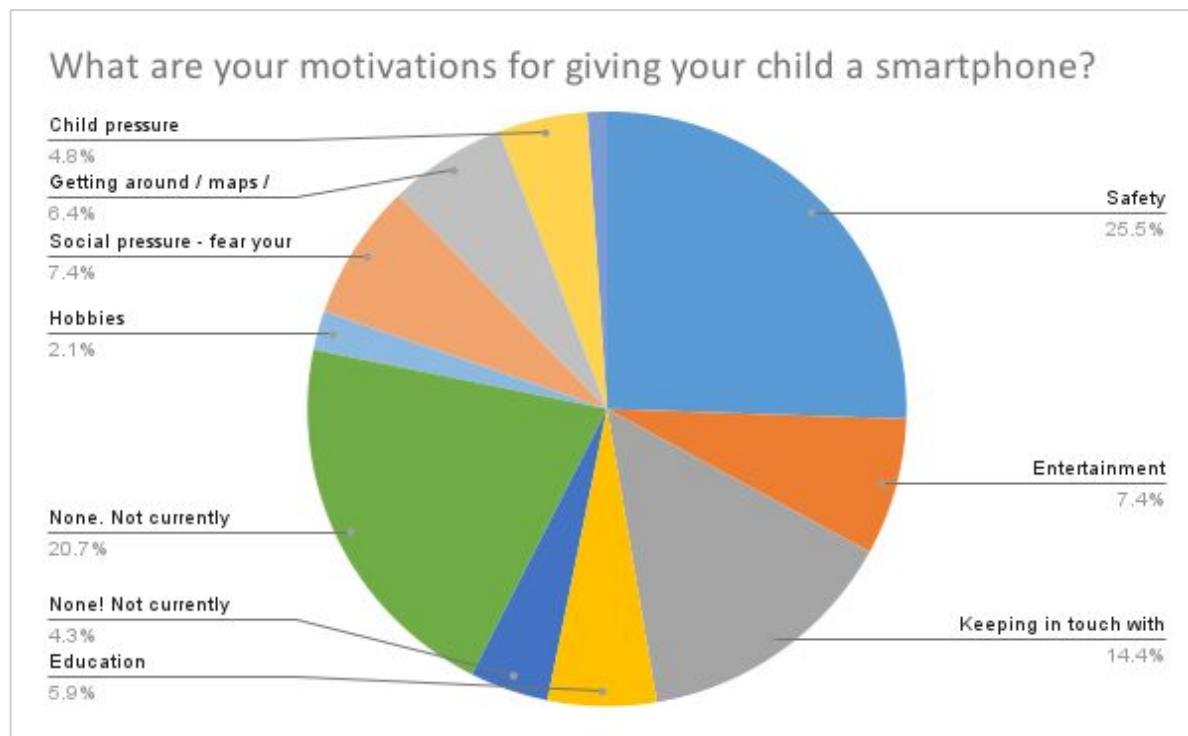
111 parents/carers answered the Smartphone Free Childhood Survey, representing a good mix from all year groups

- Of these parents, 30% have a child who owns a phone
- 15% have a child on social media (including WhatsApp)



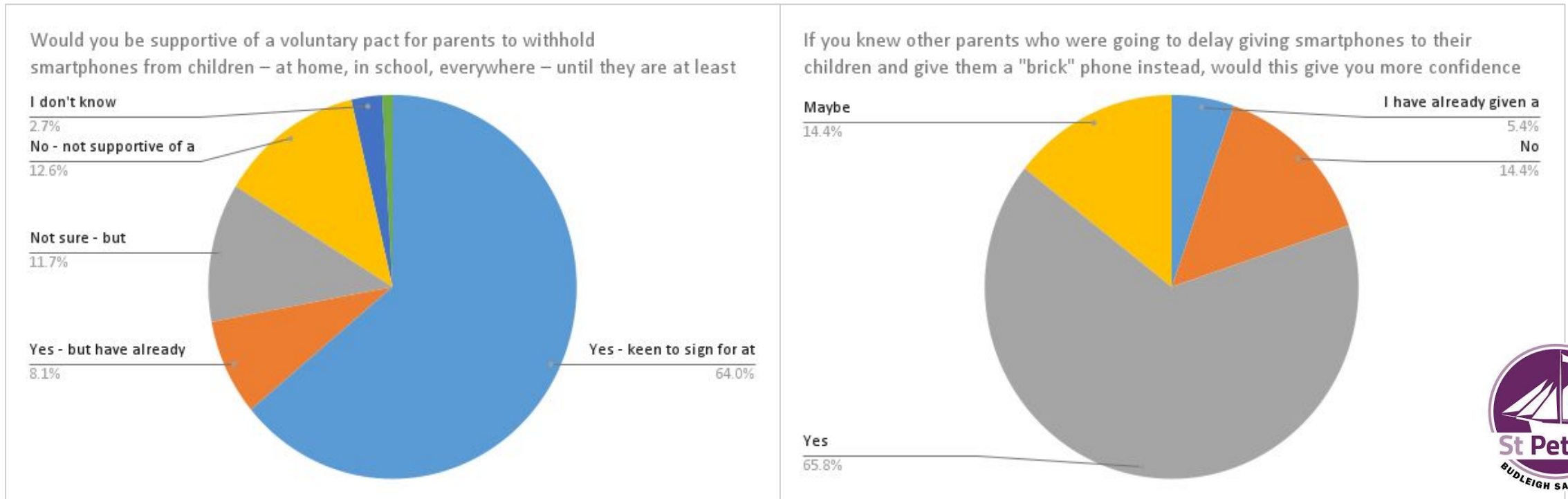
Safety and communication are the core driving motivations for parents giving their child a smartphone

25.5% of parents told us that safety is their main motivation, and 14.4% said keeping in touch with friends and family.



Most parents surveyed (64%) would support a parent pact to delay giving their child a smartphone until age 14.

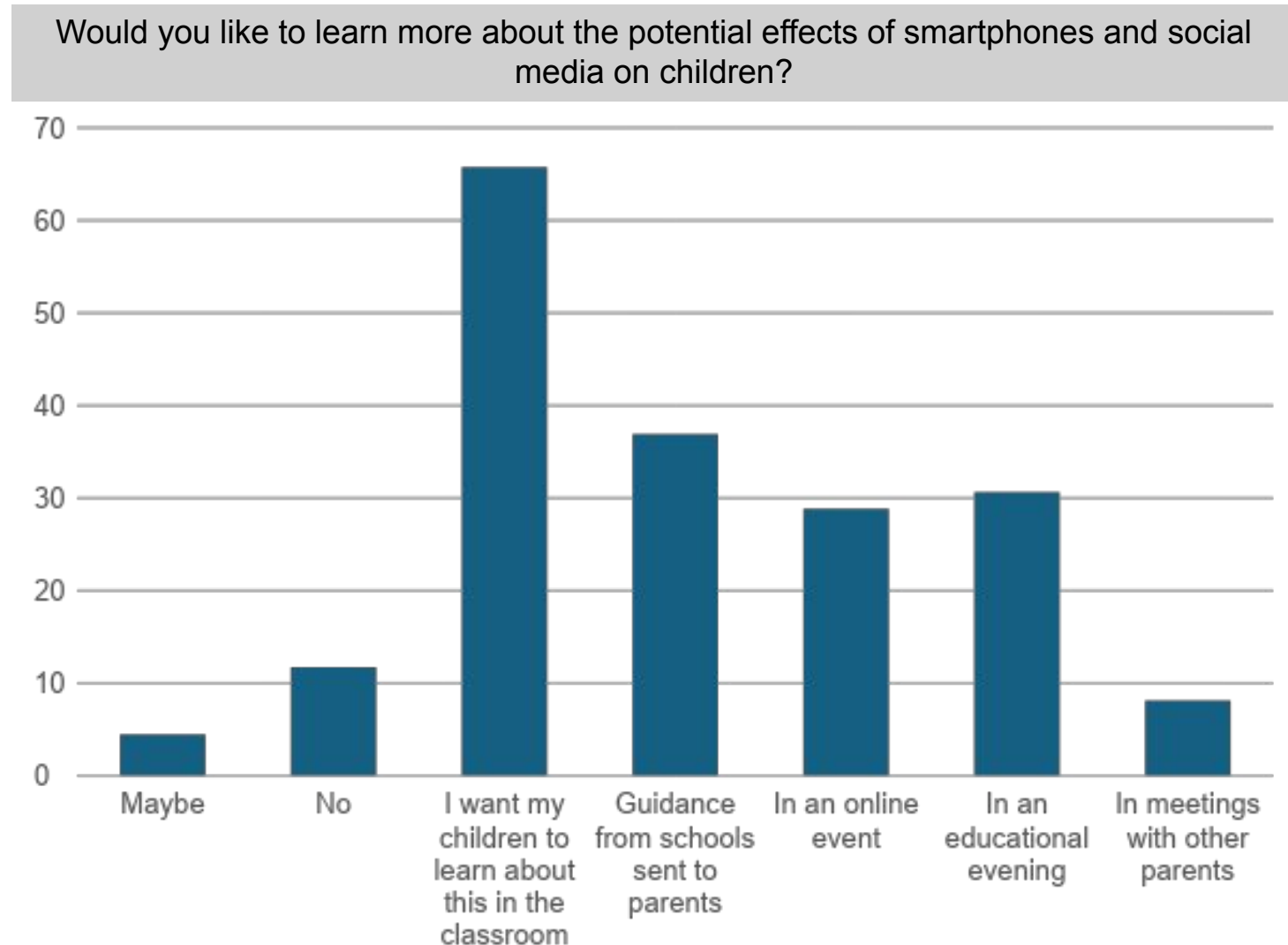
- 65% of parents said that knowing other parents would also delay smartphones and give their child a 'brick' phone instead would give them more confidence to delay, indicating a potential positive effect of having a parent pact in place.
- 20% were either not in support of the parent pact (until age 14) or had already given their child a smartphone before this age.



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)



Quote from Parents *shared with permission*

- “I’m interested in delaying phone usage, especially smartphone usage, for my child. It’s sort of become an expectation that Year 6 children have phones - but really, why does an 11 year old need a smartphone (basically a computer) in their pocket?”
- “I want to delay giving my child a smartphone for as long as I can because I want my child to feel that home is a safe space where they are not being led by the demands and stimulation of a smartphone. I worry about the impact smartphones have on children’s wellbeing & mental health.”
- “I don’t want my child to feel different or left out of the things their friends enjoy, but I just don’t think that the risks of smartphones and social media at such a young age are worth it. These devices and platforms are designed to be addictive - I feel it myself with my phone, why would I subject my child to this, too?”
- “With parental guidance, a smartphone can be really useful for both children and parents - for communicating with family, for safety, for practical reasons. Plus, it is unrealistic to avoid the peer pressure of having a smartphone once they’re in secondary school.”

Thank you.

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