



## **River Valley Community National School**

**10<sup>th</sup> April, 2024**

### **Voluntary Smart Phone Opt-In Charter:**

### **Delaying Smart Phone Ownership until Primary School Completion**

#### **Introduction:**

At River Valley Community National School, we understand the increasing prevalence of smartphones in today's society. While smartphones offer numerous advantages, we strongly encourage parents to consider delaying the purchase of smartphones for their children until they complete primary school (approximately age 12). This Opt-In Charter (voluntary charter) outlines the potential benefits of this approach and also provides recommendations for responsible phone/ smart device usage for parents who feel that their child must have at least some access to a phone/smart device before they finish primary school.

#### **Benefits of Delaying Smart Phone Ownership:**

1. ***\*\*Enhanced Social and Emotional Development:\*\****

Delaying smartphone ownership can foster better social and emotional development in children. They can learn essential face-to-face communication skills and build stronger interpersonal relationships without digital distractions.

2. ***\*\*Improved Concentration and Academic Performance:\*\****

By postponing smartphone usage, children can focus on their studies, leading to improved academic performance. Reduced screen time can enhance concentration and critical thinking skills.

3. ***Reduced Screen Time:***

Delaying smartphone ownership limits a child's exposure to excessive screen time, reducing the risk of negative effects such as sleep disturbances, decreased physical activity, and cyberbullying

4. ***Safer Online Experience:***

Young children are more vulnerable to online risks. Delaying smartphone access allows parents to educate children about responsible internet use and gradually introduce them to digital technology in a controlled environment.

5. ***Parent-Child Bonding:***

Without the constant distraction of a smartphone, parents and children can engage in more meaningful activities together, strengthening the parent-child bond.

**In cases where parents feel that their child must have access to a phone/smart device in Primary School, we recommend the following:**

1. ***Alternative Devices:***

If necessary, consider providing your child with alternative devices like basic mobile phones or tablets with restricted internet access until they complete primary school.

2. ***Digital Literacy Education:***

Ensure that your child is well-versed in digital literacy and online safety before granting smart device access. Teach them to recognise potential online threats and be responsible digital citizens.

3. ***Lead by Example:***

Parents should lead by example and exhibit responsible smartphone usage to instil good habits in their children.

**Conclusion:**

Delaying the purchase of smartphones for children until they complete primary school can bring about numerous benefits for their development and safety. Accordingly, we strongly encourage parents to consider this approach, while also emphasising the importance of responsible smartphone usage when the time is right. Together, we can help children navigate the digital world safely and responsibly.

