

A group of diverse children and adults in a classroom setting. One child is writing on a notepad. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor scene with a blue sky and green grass.

**SMARTPHONE
FREE CHILDHOOD**

Let's talk: raising kids in the smartphone era

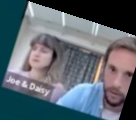
PARENT TALK - 2026



WE'RE NOT TRYING TO
BAN SMARTPHONES



WE'RE NOT BLAMING
PARENTS



SFC IS ABOUT HOPE
NOT FEAR





Why are we here?



Smartphone Free Childhood is a campaigning organisation powered by a grassroots community of parents.

We exist to challenge Big Tech's colonisation of childhood and change the cultural norm that children are given smartphones.

Because childhood's too short to be spent on a smartphone.



**We're all trying
to do the best
for our kids**



In two decades, everything's changed

2005



2026



2005

Nokias ruled...
texts, calls & snake

2007

The first
iPhone launches
"A computer in our
pocket"

2012

4G UK launch, internet
always available,
everywhere

2020s

Explosion of short-form
content & AI powered
algorithms

2025

Smartphones have
transformed society...
and childhood



THEY'RE NOT REALLY 'PHONES' AT ALL



MOBILE PHONE

Make calls, send texts, play Snake



POCKET SUPERCOMPUTER

24/7 access to the whole of the internet in your pocket



Smartphones have become 'normal' for kids



Age
6-7

1 in 3

children have a
smartphone



Age
9

Average age

a child gets a
smartphone in the
UK



Age
12

90%

of children have a
smartphone



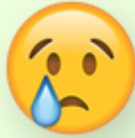
Nobody is happy with the status quo



94%

of **primary school parents** think smartphones are harmful

PARENTKIND POLL
2024



33%

of **parents of children with smartphones** have cried over their child's phone obsession

HMD POLL
2024



87%

of **teachers** agree for teens the negatives of smartphones outweigh the benefits

TEACHER TAPP SURVEY
2025



67%

of **16-18 year olds** think smartphones are harmful

PARENTKIND POLL
2024



Doctors are speaking up too

“I believe this is the most **urgent public health issue** of our time.”



Dr Rangan Chatterjee

NHS GP, AUTHOR, BROADCASTER

“Every day doctors see the **damage** smartphones are doing to children’s mental health and wellbeing.”



Dr Susie Davies

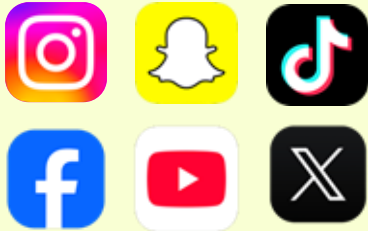
NHS GP AND CAMPAIGNER;
FOUNDER OF PAPAYA PARENTS



The only winners are the tech companies

The Attention Economy

We don't pay them.
The more **time** we spend, the more
money they make.



Attention = Profit

The business model of social media
giants is based on **addiction**

Tech companies make

\$40B+

per year from under 18s*

The attention economy profits from lost childhoods

* Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health study, 2023 - \$11B of revenue for US; \$43B is extrapolated to a global figure for 2025



It can feel like an impossible position

Either we...

Give our children an addictive product



Or we...

Risk alienating them from their peers



It's a lose-lose: for parents, young people & society



This problem is why the conversation started



2,917 425

daisygreenwell ⚡⚡ UPDATE - join us on this journey to unite parents, change the social norm and force government to protect our kids @smartphonefreechildhood ⚡⚡

I was chatting to another mum at our school recently and she told me that her 11yr old son has a smartphone, as do a third of the class in year 6. She hasn't got her other 8yr old child one yet because they haven't asked.

This conversation has filled me with terror. I don't want to give my child something that I know will damage her mental health and make her addicted. but I also know that the pressure to do so if the rest of her class have



- Two mums started a WhatsApp group about delaying smartphones for their kids.
- It went viral on Instagram
- 1000s joined in days, across the UK



Smartphone Free Childhood is now a global movement

Feb 2024

SFC began after that WhatsApp group went viral in Feb 2024



Hundreds of thousands of parents



Famous supporters



1000+ local organisers

13,750
Schools covered

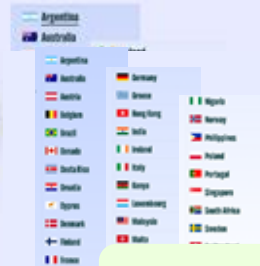
Parents in 40% of UK schools

Oct 2025

SFC is now a national charity and leading global movement

Every UK county

32 global groups





It isn't anti-tech, it's pro-childhood!

Delay smartphones until at least 14

Delay social media until at least 16

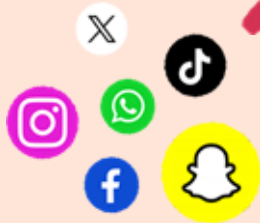
A simple phone to stay in contact

Shared access to a family computer

Alternative trackers (or go without)



SMARTPHONE



SOCIAL MEDIA

24/7 access to the internet
- Strangers can reach them
- Access to videos –beheading/
porn/extremist views/suicide



SIMPLE PHONE



FAMILY COMPUTER



TAGS OR GPS



**Let's dig into
the issue**





We all want the same for our children



**Happy
today**

*Enjoy a happy,
healthy childhood*



**Thriving
tomorrow**

*Grow into confident, capable
adults*



**Safe
always**

*Stay safe as they
explore the world*



We all want the same for our children



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*Enjoy a happy,
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**Safe
always**

*Stay safe as they
explore the world*

Smartphones make this all harder – and the data shows it



**“We’ll look back in 20 years
and be horrified by what our
children were exposed to”**



Dame Rachel de Souza

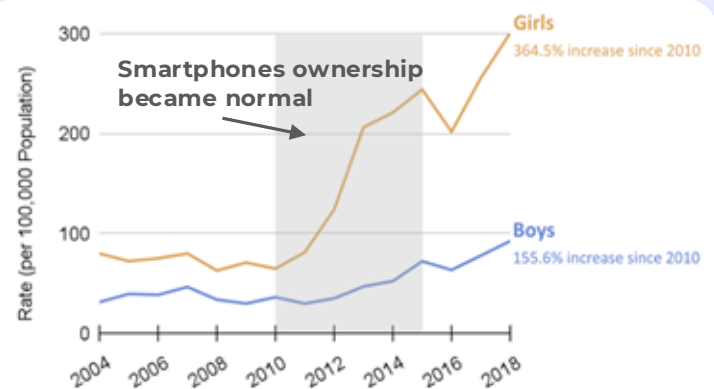
Children’s Commissioner for England, 2022



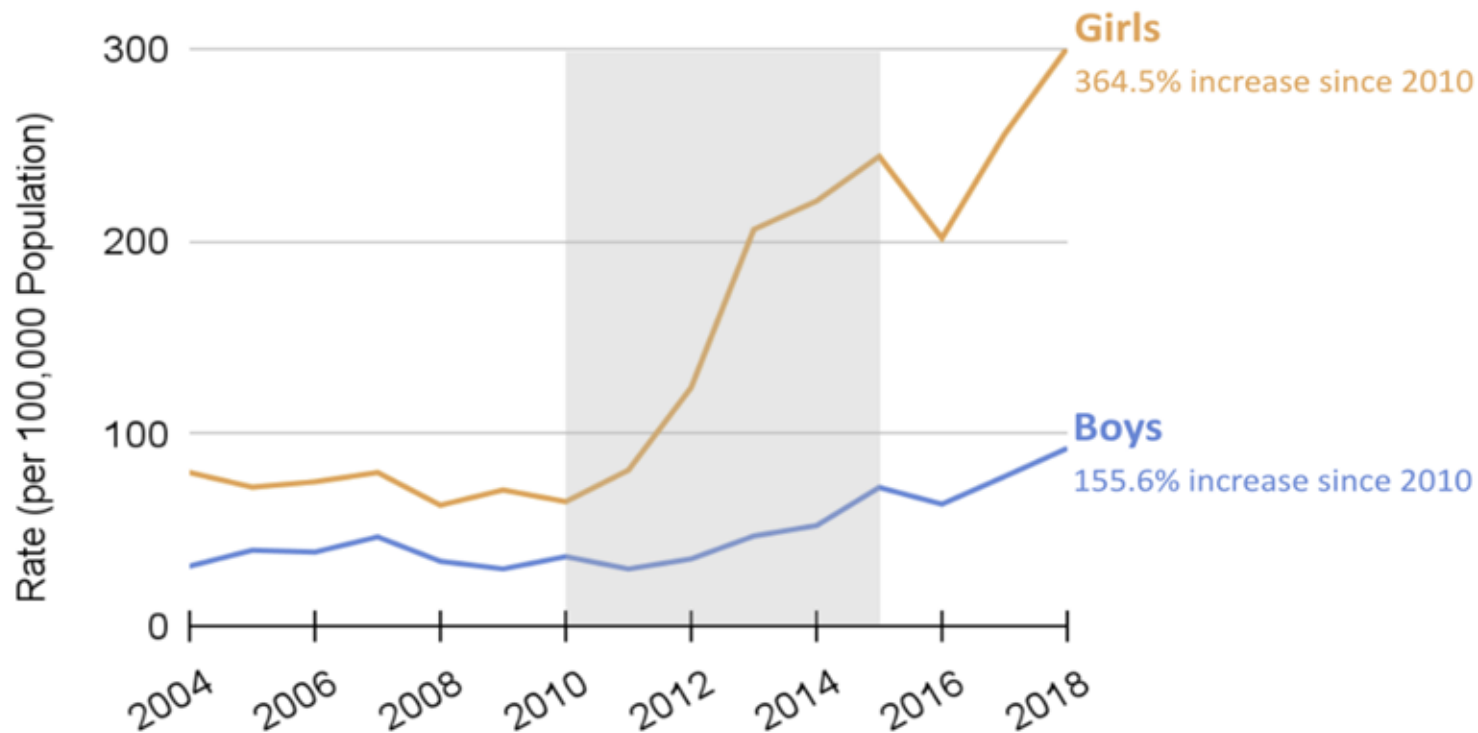
Happy
today

We're facing a teen mental health crisis

UK 10-12 year olds, self-harm episodes



UK Teens, Self-harm Episodes (Ages 10 – 12)





SMARTPHONES EXPOSE KIDS TO HARMFUL CONTENT

Having unrestricted access to the internet in your pocket creates a gateway to extreme content and viewpoints that we'd never dream of exposing children to in real life.

Hardcore pornography, extreme political views, sexualised and violent imagery, trolling and material promoting suicide, self-harm and eating disorders have become part of the fabric of modern childhood.



51%

of UK 11-13 year-olds
have seen hardcore
pornography online

British Board of Film Classification Report, March 2022

75%

of UK 15 year olds questioned
had been
sent beheading videos

Digital Childhoods, children's commissioner report, 2022

90%

of girls and 50% of boys say
they are sent unwanted explicit
content

Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools, 2021

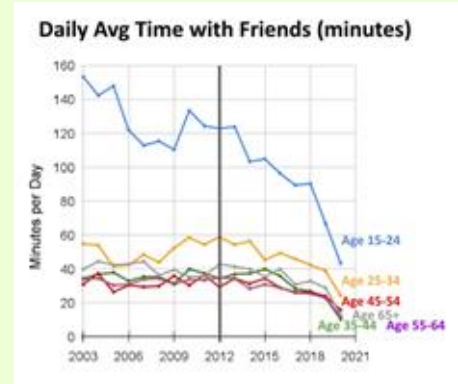


**Thriving
tomorrow**

Smartphones displace real world activities & connection

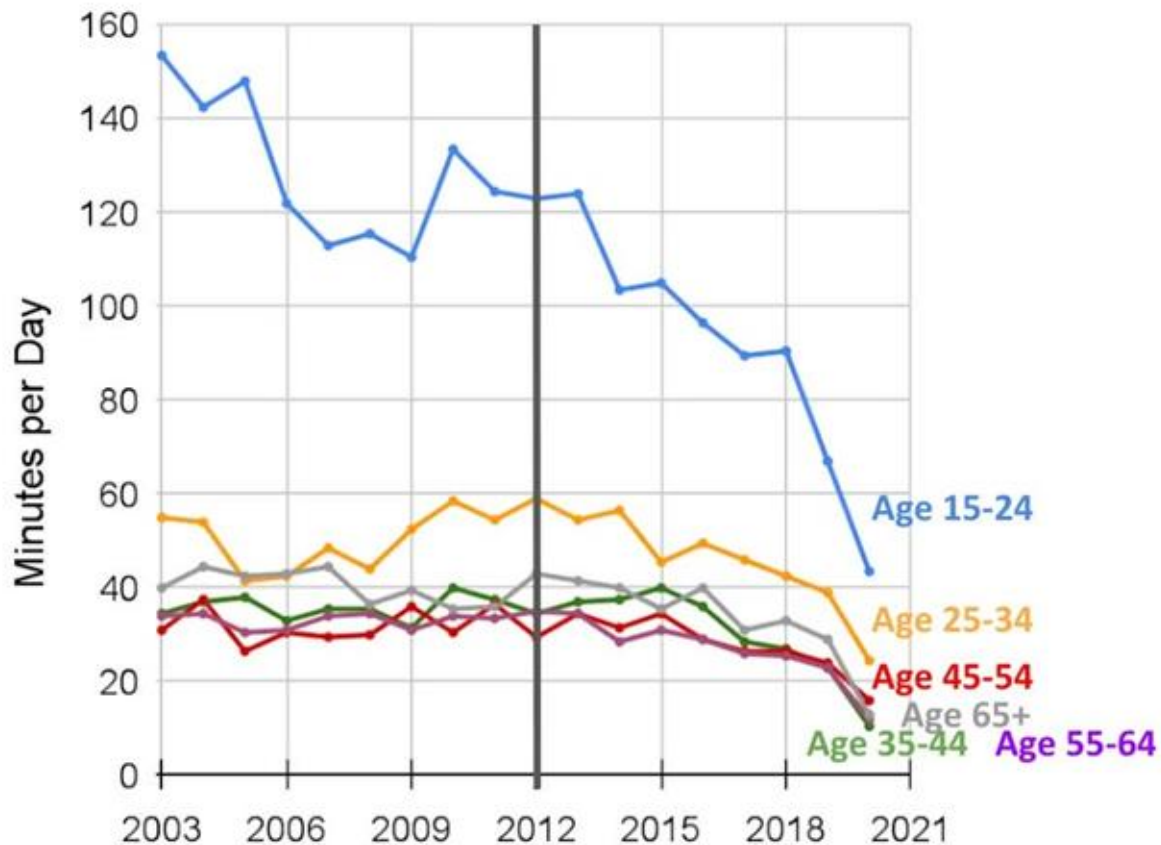
↓ 65%

**Reduction in time
spent in real life
with friends**



Since smartphones became common in the 2010s

Daily Avg Time with Friends (minutes)





“When kids are on their phones all day, it’s not just what they’re doing on the phone that matters — it’s what they’re not doing. They’re missing out on crucial experiences that help them grow into healthy adults.”



Dr Jonathan Haidt

Professor of Social Psychology, NYU



**Thriving
tomorrow**

**Smartphones fragment
children's attention**

237

**notifications a day
on average**

Median average, Common Sense Media, 2023



**Safe
always**

**The sharing of under-age
nudes is an everyday reality**

**90% of girls
50% of boys**
have been sent an
unwanted explicit image



**Safe
always**

Grooming & sextortion are ever present threats





**Safe
always**

Smartphones have increased the risk of online grooming

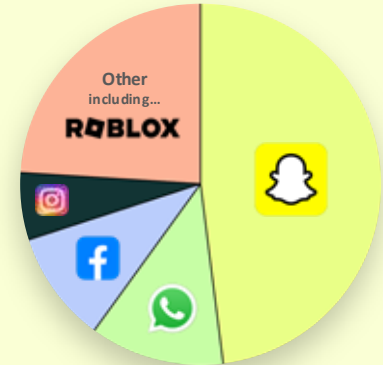
A child is

60x

more likely to be groomed online than abducted from the street

Groomers go where kids are

% of reported incidents



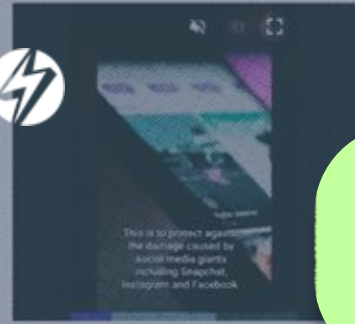
“When we give our child access to the world, we give the world access to our child”

NSPCC 2024

NSPCC FOI, 2023/4
(7,062 reported online grooming cases);
Home Office / PACT / CEOP
(116 estimated stranger child abductions 2024/5)



There's a lot of talk about the law needing to change



'Enough is enough': Fed up PM confirms nationwide social media ban - and reveals how it will work

Anthony Albanese has revealed how a nationwide age-based ban on social media accounts, including Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook, will work.



The Minister for Education is planning phones from all second-level schools research, which links use of devices to stress, anxiety and cyberbullying. *Philly.com*

Carl O'Brien
...ve that is intended to ...d children's mental

ire schools in the ...ones by July 1, 2026, ...e by children in

California Schools Must Restrict Phones Under New Law Signed by Newsom

Calls for crackdowns have mounted with reports of cyberbullying and studies indicating that smartphones are harmful to children's mental health.



Education
Mobile phones set to be banned across all



...at scho...
5
...that there is a mental health crisis among young...
...Believe social media is partly to blame
...ould follow Australia in...
...g social media for...
...teenagers
...ers are considering ways to stop children...
...accessing harmful content online, citing the...
...impact on mental health
...Oliver Wright, Rachel Sylvester
...Friday September 13 2024, 5:50pm, The Times

The New York Times

are open to a...
g social media...
r warned that...
was likely to be

Children's exposure to harmful online content a 'public health crisis', says Minister

onger laws may...
eguard young p...
phen Donnelly,

Education
Children's exposure to harmful online content a 'public health crisis', says Minister

Stronger laws may be needed to safeguard young people, according to Stephen Donnelly



France
France to trial ban on mobile phones at school for children under 15

'Digital pause' experiment at 200 secondary schools could be extended nationwide in January

Kim Willsher in Paris
Follow Kim Willsher



There's a lot of talk about the law needing to change

Some countries are making progress





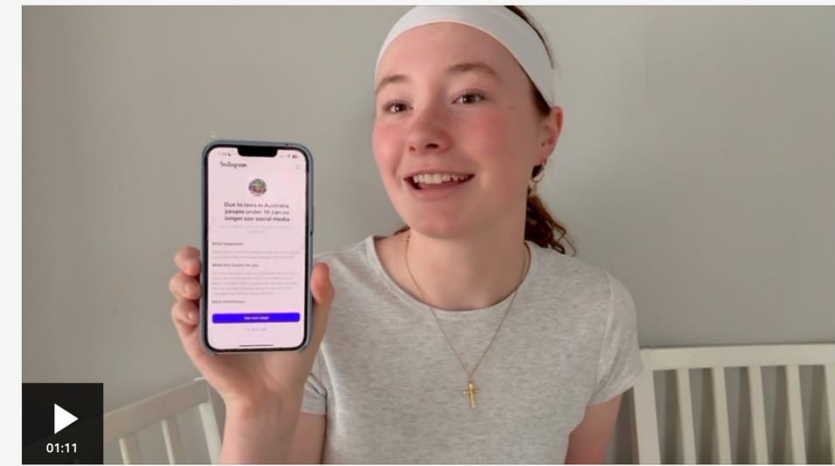
There's a lot of talk about the law needing to change

Some countries are making progress

But the radical change we need won't happen in time for our kids



Australia has banned social media for kids under 16. How will it work?



Helen Livingstone
Sydney

20 November 2025
Updated 10 December 2025

Under-16s in Australia are now banned from using major social media services including Tiktok, X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and Threads.

They cannot set up new accounts and existing profiles are being deactivated.

The ban is the first of its kind and is being watched closely by other countries.

December 2025 in Australia...

On 10 December, the world watched as Australia enacted the [first social media ban for under-16s](#). Whether it will have the desired effect of improving young people’s lives we are yet to find out. But what the ban has achieved already is clear.

Many politicians, along with academics and philosophers, have noted that **self-regulation has not been an effective safeguard** against the harms of social media - especially when the bottom line for people like Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk depends on keeping eyes on screens. For too long, these companies resisted, **decrying censorship and prioritising “free speech” over moderation.** **The Australian government decided waiting was no longer an option.** **The social media ban and similar regulation across the world is now dragging tech companies kicking and screaming toward change.** That it has taken the force of the law to ensure basic standards - such as robust age verification, teen-friendly user accounts and deactivation where appropriate - are met shows the moral argument alone was not enough.

Denmark to ban mobile phones in schools and after-school clubs

Government accepts advice of commission that also says children under 13 should not have their own smartphone



📷 A change in legislation will mean almost all children aged between seven and 16-17 will be required not to bring their phones into school. Photograph: Kathy deWitt/Alamy

Denmark is to ban mobile phones in schools and after-school clubs on the recommendation of a government commission that also found that children under 13 should not have their own smartphone or tablet.

February – September 2025 in Denmark...

The Danish government is proposing a ban on several social media apps for under-15s, according to the country's prime minister.

"We have unleashed a monster," Mette Frederiksen told [Denmark's](#) parliament on Tuesday.

"Mobile phones and social media are stealing our children's childhood."

Research published by Denmark's wellbeing commission earlier this year found 94% of the country's young people had a [social media](#) profile before they turned 13 - despite that being the minimum age for many social media platforms.

It also found nine to 14-year-olds were spending an average of three hours a day on TikTok and YouTube.

More than 90% of schools in England ban mobile phone use, survey shows

Head of National Education Union calls for statutory ban on phones in schools and social media ban for under-16s



2025 in the UK...

A third of teachers reported misogyny among pupils last week, survey suggests



Boys to be sent on courses to tackle misogyny in schools

Viral violent videos on social media are skewing young people's sense of the world

Published: September 16, 2025 9.09pm BST

by Internet Matters finds children being left worried
set by content showing shootings, stabbings and war



An online safety organisation has found children have been worried by seeing war, violence and death in news stories on their feeds. Photograph: lakshmi prasad S/Alamy



cha, Senior UK correspondent and Hazel Shearing, Education
2025
December 2025

Teachers will be given training to spot and tackle misogyny in the classroom, while high-risk pupils could be sent on behavioural courses as part of the government's long-awaited strategy to halve violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the next decade.

For example: death of Charlie Kirk

- Footage pushed directly into social media feeds
- No editors deciding if images were too distressing to be shown
- No warnings before clips were auto-played
- Young people are more likely than adults to come across disturbing images – more frequent users
- Footage is raw and unexpected, often not searched for
- Exposure can have a negative impact on children's mental health, behaviour and academic performance



Mobile phones at Welbeck...



Since we have banned mobile phones in school there have been **zero** incidents of online bullying or issues with phones to/from school.



**The solution is
to work together**



If enough of us agree to delay giving our children smartphones the **peer pressure reduces.**

Acting alone can feel impossible, but **together we're powerful.**



SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD

PARENT PACT

165,803

UK children signed up

14,127

UK schools covered

The
PARENT PACT
makes acting
together
simple



The more of us who sign, the more powerful it becomes

STEP 01

Search for your child's school

SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD
PARENT PACT

Select your school ▾

Select your school year ▾

Name

STEP 02

Sign the Pact to delay until at least 14

SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD
PARENT PACT

Sign the PARENT PACT

Sign now >

STEP 03

View results for your region, school & class

SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD
PARENT PACT

National (U)

158,63

CHILDREN

13,750

SCHOOLS

Sort by:
Leaderboard

Region name

| REGION | PACTS |
|-------------------|-------|
| Bedfordshire ↗ | 937 |
| Berkshire ↗ | 3286 |
| Bristol ↗ | 2510 |
| Buckinghamshire ↗ | 2911 |
| Cambridgeshire ↗ | 2936 |



It's happening in Welbeck

1,734

Parent Pacts have been signed in
Nottinghamshire

60

Parent Pacts have been signed in
Welbeck Primary School

25% of a class =
BREAKTHROUGH POINT

| Year / Age | Pacts |
|--------------------|-------|
| Pre-school (3 - 4) | 2 |
| Reception (4 - 5) | 1 |
| Year 1 (5 - 6) | 13 |
| Year 2 (6 - 7) | 8 |
| Year 3 (7 - 8) | 6 |
| Year 4 (8 - 9) | 7 |
| Year 5 (9 - 10) | 5 |
| Year 6 (10 - 11) | 7 |



This isn't just theory, it's working!

I heard a story today from a local school where a Year 7 kid who had an iPhone asked his parents if he could instead have a Nokia because lots of his new school mates had one. It's taking a while but the tide is turning...

19:47





What if my child already has a smartphone?

- * No phones in bedrooms
- * Public computer/tablet space
- * Allow text and phone calls
- * Delay social media
- * Delete all non-appropriate app
- * Block Wifi
- * App time limits
- * Screen-free meals



Take an interest
& have open
conversations



Review your own
smartphone
behaviours



Invest in parental
controls & monitor
constantly



Parental Controls are important but not the solution

Most kids don't have parental controls

58%

of teens say they have never had parental controls

Parentkind Poll,
May 2024

If you have them, invest time understanding how kids get around them

47%

of teens with controls have bi-passed them

Parentkind Poll,
May 2024

Performing a factory reset

Using VPN software

Hacking the router

Memorising your passcode

Using a proxy





Recently sent through 27 images of victims from a police force to see if any of the children were recognised in school.

All girls, **all in bedrooms**, age range from early primary school through secondary.



Internet access in bedrooms video...



What next?

For more information visit:

SMARTPHONEFREECHILDHOOD.ORG

Sign the
THE PARENT PACT

