



Navigating Childhood alongside Mobile Phones – Parent Handout

This handout summarises some of the key information given at the Parent Workshop on Thursday 6th February 2025. It is being emailed to all parents for reference.

The role of School alongside Mobile/ Smart Phones

- The school recognises that the choice to give a child a mobile phone or smart phone is a choice made by the parents / carers, and that different families will have different rules.
- The school teaches e-safety, including mobile phone safety, as part of its core PDL and Computing curriculum.
- The school is responsive to the needs of year groups and adapts teaching to meet the needs of the particular cohort.
- The school has clear boundaries around how mobile and smart phones are used on the school site. Only children in Year 5 & Year 6 are allowed to bring a phone to school.
- The school welcomes parents informing them of issues related to mobile phones, so that relationships in school can be monitored; however, if parents feel a law or boundary has been crossed, the parent should act appropriately to safeguard their child, informing the police if necessary.

Issues the school have dealt with related to inappropriate use of mobile phones 2024-2025:

Inappropriate discussion, group chats on Whatsapp (including potential cases for cyber bullying / misuse of language linked to protected characteristics)	Lack of awareness of implications for misuse of technology, alongside criminal responsibility from the ages of 10 upwards
Sharing of phone numbers without permission	Talking to strangers
Using phones without adult supervision (including in the early hours)	Underage use of social media apps and sites (whatsapp, Instagram, Snapchat etc)
Grooming	Sharing of photos without permission

The positive message is we were made aware of these because children told a trusted adult.

Data collected by our School Council from children in our school:

I have a Smartphone (a smartphone is a phone that connects to the internet by 4G/wifi. You can access the internet, apps such as WhatsApp, facetime, ring and text):			
Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
29% - Yes	37% - Yes	60% - Yes	82% - Yes
I have a Mobile Phone but it is not a smartphone. I can text and make phone calls but can't load Apps:			
Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
6% - Yes	6% - Yes	1% - Yes	5% - Yes
I have a mobile phone and my grown-up at home regularly checks what Apps I have and who I am contacting:			
Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
10% - Yes	26% - Yes	32% - Yes	51% - Yes
I don't have a mobile phone but I know I am getting one when I am in...:			
Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
3 children	30 children	31 children	14 children

I have mobile phone numbers of people I have not met in real life and I talk with them on Apps such as TikTok, Snapchat, Whatsapp etc:			
Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
1% - Yes	0% - Yes	8% - Yes	9% - Yes
Someone has been unkind to me on my mobile phone on an App such as WhatsApp, Tiktok etc:			
Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
6% - Yes	12% - Yes	19% - Yes	37% - Yes
I have been unkind to someone on my phone. I did not think before I sent it and I felt bad afterwards:			
Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
1% - Yes	7% - Yes	15% - Yes	29% - Yes
I would prefer it if nobody had mobile phones:			
Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
32% - Yes	27% - Yes	1% - Yes	14% - Yes
I would like it if there was a way for my grownup to help me use my phone more:			
Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
12% - Yes	16% - Yes	12% - Yes	22% - Yes
I have seen something I did not like on a mobile phone – this might have been by accident, by someone sending it directly to me, or by scrolling:			
Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
8% - Yes	21% - Yes	20% - Yes	43% - Yes

Benefits and Positives of Mobile/ Smart Phones:

From Parents perspective:	From children at our school's perspective:
* Safety – you know where your child is * You can stay in contact (most of the time) * Gives children independence * Children can stay connected to friends and family	* Keep safe * Speak to adults * Phones are fun * Limited time on them * Stay in contact with family who are far away * Good in an emergency

Downfalls and Negatives of Mobile/ Smart Phones:

From Parents perspective:	From children at our school's perspective:
* Cyberbullying * Potential mental health issues * Unprotected use of social networking * Access to unsuitable content * Eye strain from mobile phones * Decreased attention span	* People show off about phones * Too young for phones * Can get scams sent over * People you don't know can contact you * A distraction if cycling / walking

Alternatives to Smart Phones:

Alternatives to Smart Phones:	Benefits
The Light phone II The Phone Pinwheel Nokia 2660 Flip Balance Phone Nokia 5710 Nokia 105	Look like smartphones, only calls and texts Limited (or no) internet access No camera Headphone jack enabled Contact safelist feature Still include Google maps, Spotify – no web browser or social media Inbuilt GPS locator
More information available at: https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/alternatives or in-store or on mobile phone provider websites.	

Family safe-practice around mobile phone use:

Talk! The best way to protect your child is to ensure a free and open dialogue around mobile phone use. It is not an invasion of privacy to know who your child is speaking to, or what they are accessing. It is about safeguarding your child.

How to respond to: “I want to download...”

- Why do you want the app?
- Let's look together first at what it is; I might download it first, then we can decide.
- Do you know how the app works?

As parents, how can you protect them?

1. Educate them
2. Be a role model
3. Set time restrictions
4. Set App restrictions - block them
5. Set phone permissions so children must 'ask' their grownup to download apps.
6. Check daily what they are accessing - who are they friends with/talking to?
7. Spend time considering if they need it- why are you doing it?

It is NOT about control or invasion of privacy.

Where can I find out more:

Here comes the irony! The internet is a great place to find out about social media apps you may be unfamiliar with, as well as how to set up parent controls, find out about apps your child may want to download, and understand how to report inappropriate content or contact.

Here are some websites which may support you in getting started:

- <https://www.common sense media.org/app-reviews>
- [Smartphone Free Childhood](#)
- [Internet connected devices | NSPCC](#)
- [2025 Best Parental Control Apps & Software | SafeWise](#)