

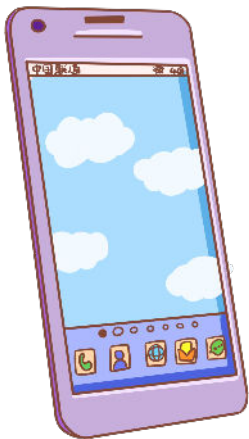


Dashwood Banbury Academy

an Aspirations Academy

Growing together; succeeding together

A Parent's Guide to Mobile Phone Health & Safety for our Children



What do you think
the current issues
are?

What issues do we see at Dashwood?

1. Screen time - headaches
2. Snapchat/ Whatsapp - inappropriate discussions/cyber bullying/racism/homophobic behaviour
3. Talking to people the do not know
4. Using phones in the early hours -tiredness, lack of concentration/motivation

With the age at which children get a phone becoming younger and younger, how can you, as a parent, ensure your kids practise mobile phone health and safety?

We understand there is **increasing pressure** for children at primary school to have their own mobile phone. We understand that mobile phones can have many benefits, including being able to keep in **contact while your child** is at a friend's house or walking to school. However, there are some **dangers**, especially for young children, when they are using mobile phones and other devices.

Our aim in this session:

- to guide you through mobile phone health and safety for children
- uncover some of the potential dangers of phones (both online and offline)
- share our top advice, from years of experience working with our young people, for smartphone safety
 - answer questions that we are frequently asked by parents



Recently, the debate about mobile phones, especially for young people, has become regularly discussed in the media.

There has been speculation the government is considering a ban on the sale of mobile phones for children under 16 years old.

Last month a poll found that most parents would back a ban on children under 16 having smartphones. The survey for the charity ParentKind found 58% of parents of school-aged kids think smartphones should be banned for under 16s.

It rose to 77% among mums and dads whose children are of primary school age. In February 2012, Education Secretary Gillian Keegan published new guidance for teachers on how to enforce a proposed ban on phones in English schools.





97% of 12-year-olds in Britain have a smartphone.

When children started getting them, there was no research about their impact. Now there is, and it's overwhelming.

Smartphones expose children to harmful content, raise the likelihood of developing a mental illness and are highly addictive.

But parents have been put in an impossible position.

Either we give our children access to something that opens the door to porn, bullying, grooming and the anxiety machine that is social media, or we risk alienating them from their peers.

Regulation hasn't caught up with the technology, so it's parents and children that lose out.

We started Smartphone Free Childhood to give power back to parents, and to kickstart the change society needs.

We've learned over time to restrict alcohol and smoking to certain age groups. Smartphones have been with us for barely 15 years, and now we know their effect, we need to act.

Source: <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>

Benefits of mobile phones

- Safety - you know where your child is
- You can stay in contact most of the time
- Can allow the children to become more independent
- Children can stay in contact with friends and family



Dangers of Smartphones



Smartphones pose several challenges and dangers for you and your child. These risks include cyberbullying, unprotected use of social networking, access to unsuitable content on the internet, eye strain, decreased attention span, and phone theft. Tech companies spend billions on making apps and devices intentionally addictive, affecting young brains in a way that is similar to gambling.

Cyberbullying

A growing issue, cyberbullying is the harassment of individuals through electronic channels such as mobiles, online forums, gaming chat rooms and social media. Examples of cyberbullying could include hostile text messages, the spreading of rumours, or the sharing of embarrassing photos. As cyberbullying takes place online, it's a challenge for parents and or teachers to become aware of this issue unless a child speaks up about it.

Potential mental health issues

Mobile phones are directly linked to poor mental health and low self-esteem, especially in girls. And social media use in teens correlates directly to rates of anxiety and depression. There has been an explosion of mental illness in Gen Z, the generation that grew up with smartphones. Multiple studies from across the world have found a correlation between teen depression, anxiety and suicide, and excessive smartphone use.

Unprotected use of social networking

Stranger danger isn't just an issue offline. Predators can easily hide their identities online while asking probing questions about a child's friends, family and interests. The internet is a gateway to pornography, bullying, grooming and all sorts of harmful content. Social has been proven to increase self-harm and suicidal tendencies amongst adolescents.

Access to unsuitable content

The internet is home to many things, including inappropriate and adult content. Studies have shown that 1 in 10 children between the age of 8 and 11 who go online have seen something nasty or worrying. Even playing age-inappropriate games can expose children to swearing or images of violence. Smartphone expose extreme safeguarding risk - Through their smartphones, UK children are exposed to: violent and sexual imagery; grooming; cyberbullying and sexting.

Eye strain from mobile phones

Too much screen time can lead to burning, itchy or tired eyes in children. While children can better adapt to the high-energy, short-wavelength blue light that devices emit, too much exposure can lead to long term problems. These long term side effects can include headaches, fatigue, blurred vision as well as head and neck ache.

Decreased attention span

Mobile phones, televisions and other devices are rewriting how our brains work – for adults and children alike. It has been proven that children with prolonged access to screens can develop a decreased attention span. This is unsurprising, given that modern technology means their brains are being trained to continually expect and receive new information. Smartphones have a negative impact on learning, academic achievement and the kind of cognitive functioning needed for success at school. They are designed to distract children's attention and increase dependency on them. Schools which ban mobile phones have higher exam results.



What can we do as parents to protect them?

1. Educate them
2. Be a role model
3. Set time restrictions
4. Set App restrictions - block them
5. Check daily what they are accessing - who are they friends with/talking to?
6. Spend time considering if they need it- why are you doing it?

Research articles and resources:

National Online Safety

NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Safer Internet: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

CEOP Parents: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

Barnardos:

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/child-abuse-and-harm/keeping-children-safe-online>

Young Minds: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/media/nkvbqk20/online-safety-updated-feb-2020.pdf>

ParentKind:

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/for-parents/health-and-wellbeing/how-to-be-a-tech-friendly-parent>

Gov.co.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers-whose-children-are-using-social-media>



Dangers of mobile phones: <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/about>

When we all started using smartphones, we had little understanding of the impact they have on children and teenagers. Now we have a lot more evidence from research:

SMARTPHONES ARE HIGHLY ADDICTIVE

Tech companies spend billions on making apps and devices intentionally addictive, affecting young brains in a way that is similar to gambling. One study found one-in-five teens looked at YouTube “almost constantly”. (Link: [2022 Study into teens and social media](#))

SMARTPHONE USE CORRELATES TO MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

They’ve been directly linked to poor mental health and low self-esteem, especially in girls. And social media use in teens correlates directly to rates of anxiety and depression. (Link: [Depression and social media use in teens](#))

SMARTPHONES EXPOSE CHILDREN TO HARMFUL CONTENT

The internet is a gateway to pornography, bullying, grooming and all sorts of harmful content. Social has been proven to increase self-harm and suicidal tendencies amongst adolescents. (Link: [2020 study on smartphones and mental health.](#))

SMARTPHONES REDUCE ATTENTION-SPANS

They’re changing the way children’s brains develop, and fundamentally affecting their ability to concentrate. (Link: [2021 Study by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights](#))

SMARTPHONES ROB CHILDREN OF THEIR CHILDHOOD

Even harmless content isn’t harmless. Time spent on a device is time not spent with other children; playing, exploring, interacting and developing vital social skills. (Link: [Must-watch Jonathan Haidt Talk](#))

Despite the compelling evidence a [fifth of three to four-year-olds](#) in the UK have a smartphone. By aged 11, only 17% don’t have one.