



## SMART PHONES & SCHOOL

Over the last school year, we have noticed a significant increase in pupils presenting at school as tired, irritable, struggling to concentrate and essentially coming to school **not ready to learn** in our classrooms.

There is strong evidence to suggest that there is a correlation between smart phone usage / dependency and a noticeable negative impact on students' demeanour, and by extension, educational outcomes.

Research shows that excessive phone usage can lead to reduced focus and concentration. Frequent use of social media, messaging apps and entertainment platforms with constant notifications etc. can disrupt sleep patterns, leading to fatigue and decreased cognitive functioning in the classroom, and ultimately poor academic performance.

There is also strong evidence to suggest a correlation between smart phone usage / dependency and a negative impact on your child's mental health.

Excessive use of social media can lead to constant social comparison, potentially causing feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem in children.

Smartphone addiction can develop in children, leading to impulsive behaviour and reduced attention span, affecting their overall mental health.

Some studies have found correlations between heavy smartphone use and increased levels of anxiety and depression in children.

Excessive smartphone use can lead to a sedentary lifestyle, which may contribute to mental health issues and obesity.

If your child does not currently have a smart phone, you should resist for as long as you can. If your child already has a smart phone, we have some information and advice below that we'd like you to consider.



It is our strong preference that your child **does not** have a smart phone whilst attending school. Your child is not permitted to access the phone whilst on school grounds unless they have a medical condition which the phone monitors.

Your child should be able to journey to school without the distraction of a smart phone.

However, if you strongly feel that your child needs access to a phone directly before / after school, we have a *School Mobile Phone Policy* which must be adhered to.

## SMART PHONES AT HOME

As a parent, it's essential to be aware of the potential dangers associated with mobile phone usage for children under 12 years old. While mobile phones can be valuable tools, they also come with several risks that parents should be mindful of:

1. **Physical health concerns:** Extended use of mobile phones can lead to physical health problems in young children. Prolonged screen time may contribute to issues like eye strain, headaches, neck and back pain, and poor posture.
2. **Sleep disruption:** The blue light emitted by screens can interfere with the production of the sleep hormone melatonin, making it harder for children to fall asleep. Poor sleep can negatively impact their overall health, academic performance, and mood.
3. **Cyberbullying and online harassment:** Children may encounter cyberbullying or harassment on social media platforms or through messaging apps. Younger children may be especially vulnerable to emotional distress from such incidents.
4. **Inappropriate content exposure:** Without proper parental controls and monitoring, children can access inappropriate content, such as violence, explicit material, or harmful ideologies, which may have a detrimental impact on their emotional development.

5. **Digital addiction:** Excessive mobile phone use can lead to digital addiction, where children become overly dependent on their devices, affecting their ability to engage in real-life social interactions and other essential activities.
6. **Privacy and security risks:** Young children may not fully grasp the importance of online privacy and may inadvertently share personal information or engage with strangers online, which can lead to dangerous situations.
7. **Academic performance:** Constant mobile phone usage can be a distraction and may negatively impact a child's focus and academic performance at school.
8. **Physical safety concerns:** Preteens may venture into unsafe locations while using their phones, unaware of potential risks associated with distracted walking or cycling.
9. **Developmental issues:** Overreliance on smartphones might hinder the development of critical skills, such as problem-solving, creativity, and emotional intelligence, as children may use their phones as a constant source of entertainment and comfort.

To mitigate these dangers, it's essential for parents to establish healthy boundaries and guidelines for mobile phone usage. Here are some tips to help ensure responsible phone usage:

- **Limit screen time:** Set reasonable limits on daily screen time, and encourage children to engage in other activities, such as outdoor play, reading, or hobbies.
- **Supervise usage:** Monitor your child's online activities, configure parental controls and keep communication lines open so they can approach you if they encounter any issues.
- **Create tech-free zones:** Designate specific areas, like bedrooms and mealtimes, as tech-free zones to promote family bonding and better sleep habits.
- **Model healthy behaviour:** Lead by example and demonstrate responsible phone usage yourself, as children often mimic their parents' habits.
- **Educate about online safety:** Teach your child about online safety, privacy concerns, and the importance of treating others with respect online.
- **Encourage real-life interactions:** Prioritize face-to-face interactions with friends and family to promote social skills and emotional development.

By being aware of the potential dangers and taking proactive steps to manage mobile phone usage, parents can ensure that their children have a safer and healthier relationship with technology.