

## Prevents Real Play

Smartphone use can stop children from socialising and engaging in imaginative or active play

## Attention Span

Smartphones reduce focus and attention, hindering learning

## Undermines Mental Health

Overexposure to social media and screens can negatively affect children's emotional and mental well-being.

## Safety Risks

Smartphones expose children to safeguarding issues, including cyberbullying and inappropriate content.

## Emotional Impact

The addictive nature of smartphones can lead to mood swings, sleep disruption, and over-reliance on digital validation.



# SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD

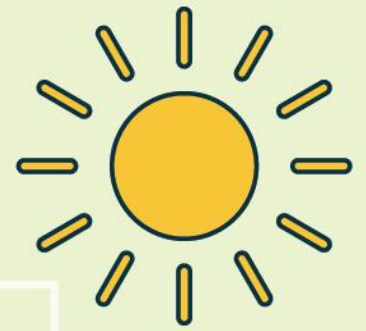


Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January

# WELCOME SMARTPHONE FREE INFORMATION EVENING FOR PARENTS



# Welcome to our panelists



**Dr Susie Davies** PAPAYA Parents

**Susan Dunigan** The Enlightened Parent

**Sarah Pswarayi** Smartphone Free Childhood

**PS Jordan Keen and PC Ben Lowe** West Midlands Police

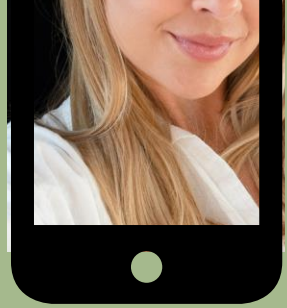
**Ros Fitter** Headteacher, Tidbury Green School

**Claire Smith** Principal, Tudor Grange Academy Solihull





**DR SUSIE DAVIES**  
GP AND FOUNDER OF PAPAYA  
AUTHOR OF *THE HEALTHY SELFIE*



# SCREENTIME

The average UK child spends **3 hrs 48 mins**  
a day online.

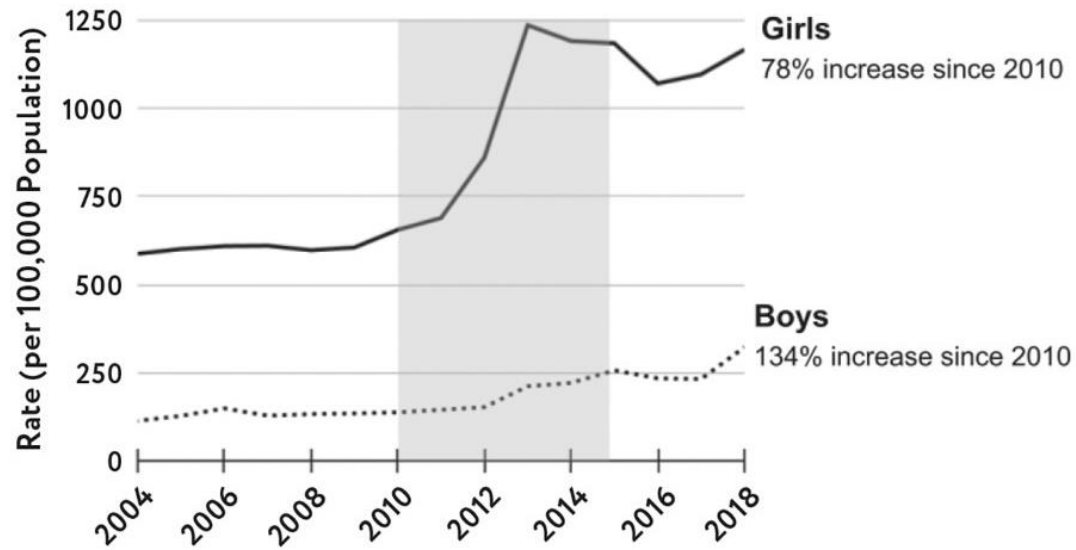
That's **26.6 hours** a week

**58 days** a year

**11 years** 67 days over a lifetime



## Self-Harm Episodes, U.K. Teens



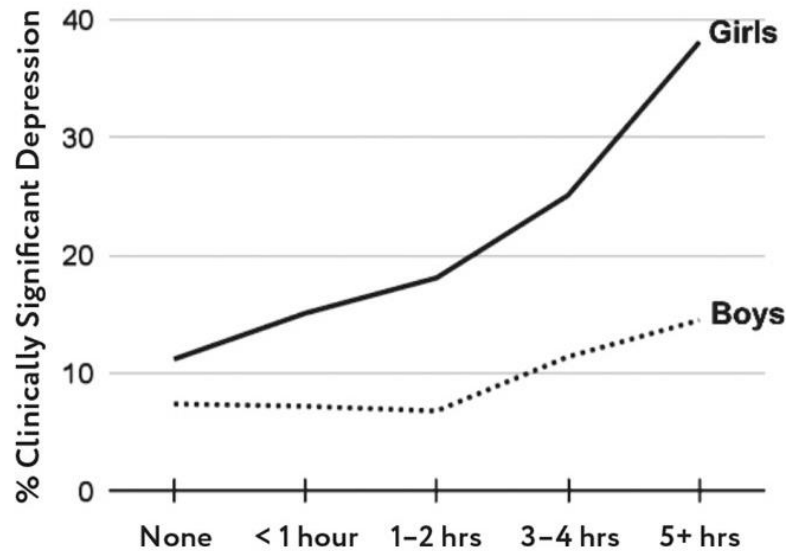
**Figure 1.9.** U.K. teens' (ages 13–16) self-harm episodes. (Source: Cybulski et al., 2021, drawing from two databases of anonymized British medical records.)<sup>51</sup>

Figure from The Anxious Generation, Jonathan Haidt

## MENTAL HEALTH

According to NHS data in the **past decade** childhood **outdoor accidents** have reduced **70%** but **self-harm** has increased **93%**.

## Depression by Level of Social Media Use, U.K.



**Figure 6.2.** Percent of U.K. teens depressed as a function of hours per weekday on social media. Teens who are heavy users of social media are more depressed than light users and nonusers, and this is especially true for girls.

(Source: Millennium Cohort Study.)<sup>11</sup>

Figure from The Anxious Generation, Jonathan Haidt

MENTAL HEALTH

1 in 5  
16 year old girls  
are in contact  
with CAMHS.



# LONELINESS



**16-24 year old's** are the **loneliest** group in society and the more friends you had on Facebook the more likely you were to feel lonely.

All in mind, BBC radio 4 loneliness survey, Oct 2018





# CYBERBULLYING

**1 in 5 are bullied online**

Of those bullied:

**70%** were adversely affected

**24%** self harm

**13 %** delete the app

Online bullying in England and Wales - Office for National  
Statistics ([ons.gov.uk](https://ons.gov.uk)), 2020

Ditch the label, The Wireless report , 2017





# SLEEP

Pre-teens lose the equivalent of a **night's sleep** per week to social media.

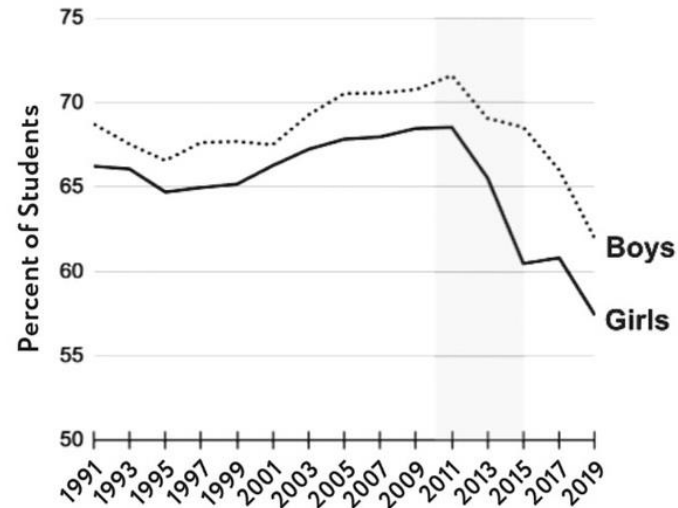
**73%** of teenagers take their phone to bed with them.



# WHY?

- ▶ Online comparison
- ▶ Self-esteem
- ▶ Social isolation and loneliness
- ▶ Cyberbullying, grooming, inappropriate content
- ▶ Opportunity costs and loss of sleep

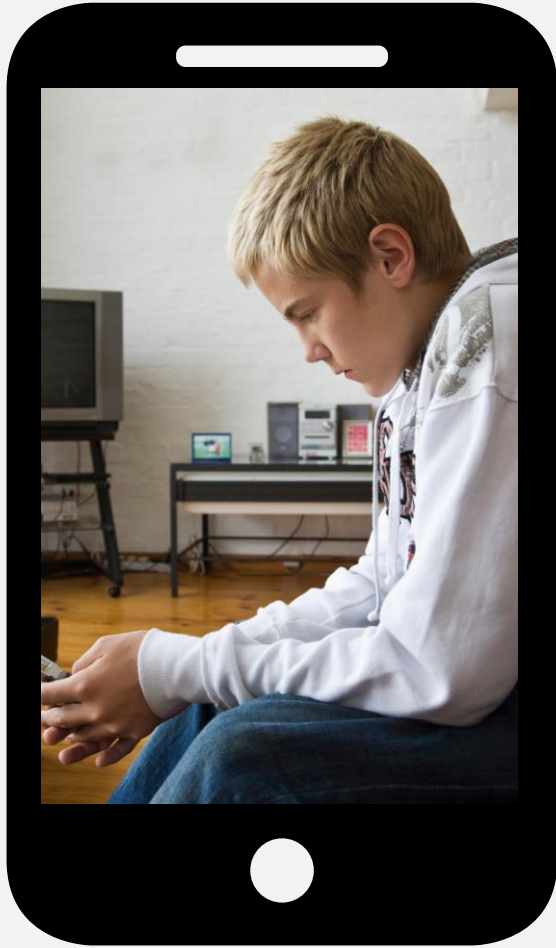
## Satisfied with Oneself



**Figure 6.5.** The sociometer plunge of 2012. Percent of U.S. students (8th, 10th, and 12th grade) who said they were satisfied with themselves. (Source: Monitoring the Future.)

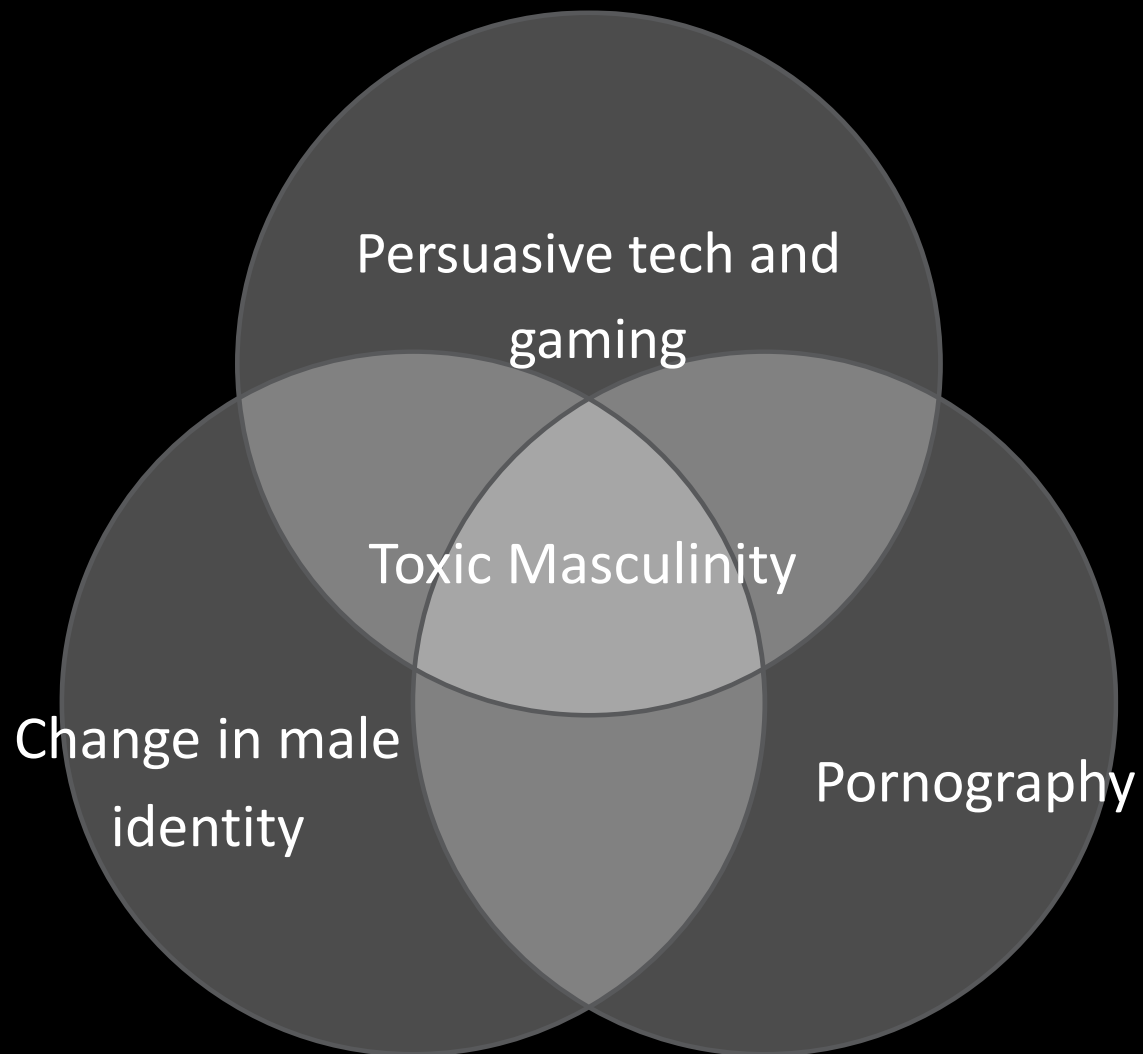


Young people are comparing their real selves with other peoples' curated images and highlight reels.



# WHY?

- ▶ Online pornography
- ▶ Gaming
- ▶ Self-esteem
- ▶ Cyberbullying, grooming, inappropriate content
- ▶ Opportunity costs and loss of sleep



The prevalence of **online pornography**, the **addictive** nature of tech and the change in **male identity** have created a vacuum in which Andrew Tate can thrive.



# GAMING



- ▶ Three-quarters of UK 5- to 15-year-olds played games online in 2021.
- ▶ 3-4% of gamers develop gaming disorder

[Online Nation 2021 report \(offcom.org.uk\)](https://www.offcom.org.uk/reports-and-research/online-nation-2021-report)

# GAMING



- ▶ Reward- purpose
- ▶ Immersive, escapism and dopaminergic
- ▶ Sociable and sense of belonging



You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are  
and change the ending.

C.S. Lewis

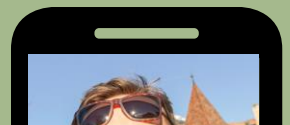
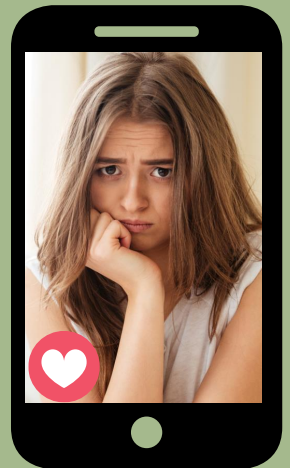
# SAFER INTERNET PLEDGE

1) Be committed to discuss tech use and online harm as a family.

2) Keep phones out of bedrooms at night.

3) Use filters and parental control apps. Qustodio

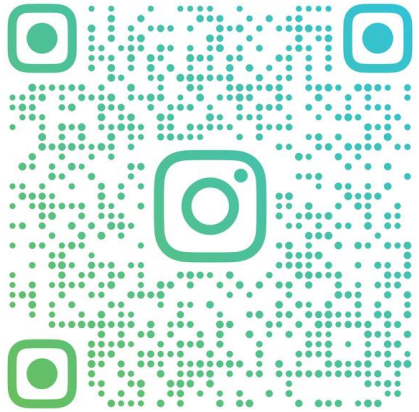
[www.papayaparents.com](http://www.papayaparents.com)





# Susan Dunigan

## Founder of The Enlightened Parent



THE\_ENLIGHTENED\_PARENT









**Cyberbullying**

**Predators**

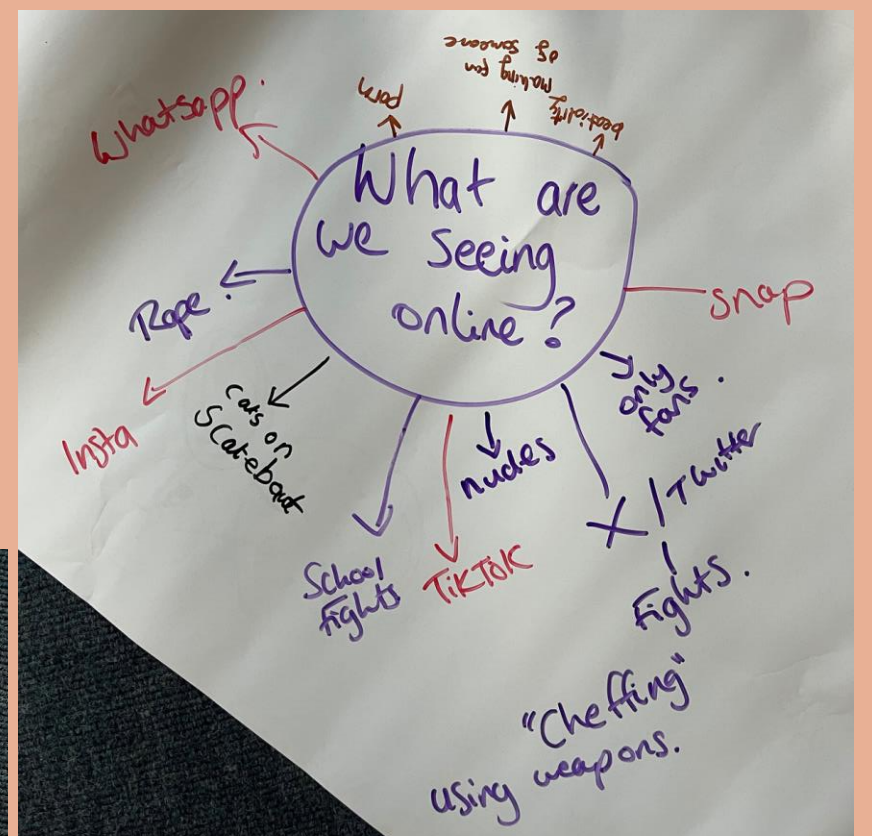
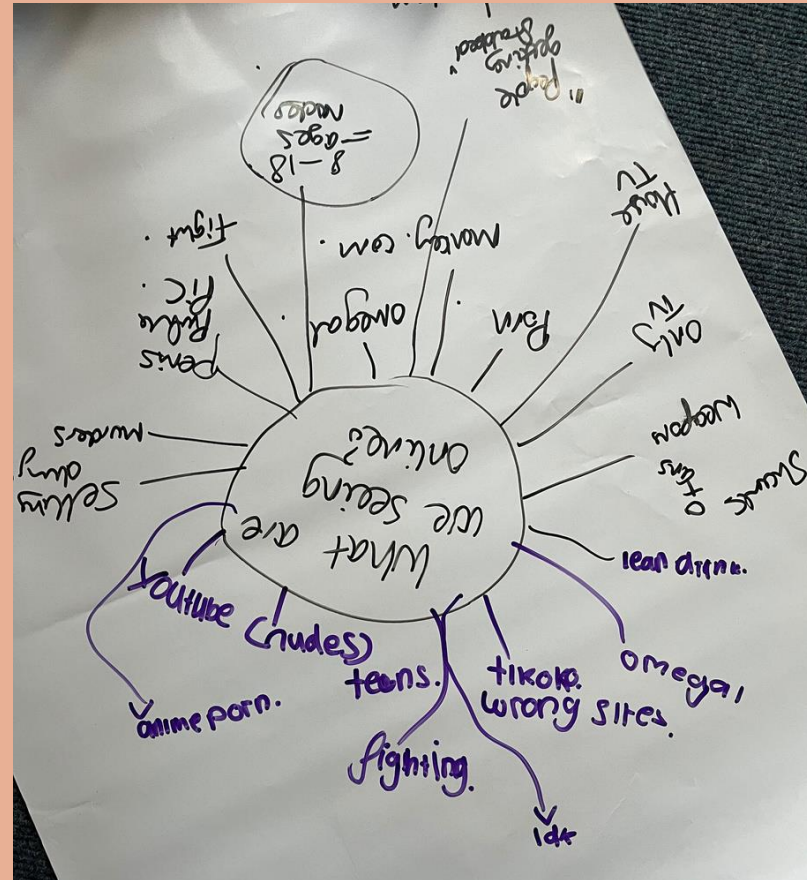
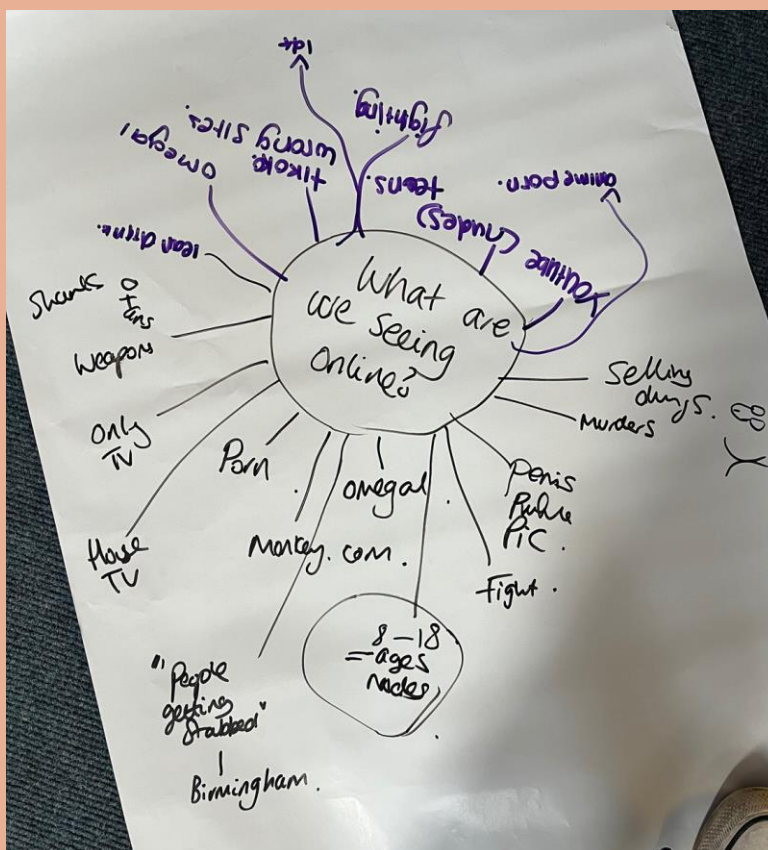
**Inappropriate  
content**

**Phishing**

**Exploitation**

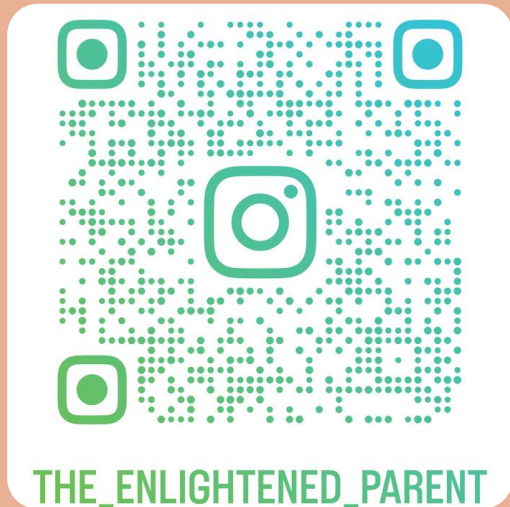
- **Poor mental health**
- **Social skills**
- **Perception of healthy relationships**
- **Addiction**
- **Gambling**
- **Sleep disturbance**





# Susan Dunigan

## Founder of The Enlightened Parent







# **SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD**

[www.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk](http://www.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk)

[@smartphonefreechildhood](https://www.instagram.com/smartphonefreechildhood)



*Smartphone Free Childhood is a restricted fund under the auspices of Prism the Gift Fund, Charity Number 1099682.*





The solution is to  
work together





If we all agree to delay giving our children smartphones, and instead gave them brick phones until at least the end of Year 9, the peer pressure instantly reduces.

Saying no can feel impossible when you're acting alone. Acting collectively makes it infinitely easier.





This is what Smartphone Free Childhood is all about.

It's a growing movement of 150,000 parents in the UK who are coming together to support each other in delaying access to smartphones and social media for their children.

It's coordinated via a national network of WhatsApp communities where parents can learn more about the issue, find other like-minded parents and support one another.





# WE'RE NOT ANTI-TECH, WE'RE PRO-CHILDHOOD

Technology has immense benefits, and young people should be able to enjoy the opportunities it creates – when they're ready and when it's safe to do so.

But childhood is precious and fleeting. All children should have the opportunity to learn, develop and grow free from the addictive-by-design algorithms and age-inappropriate content of social media and smartphones.



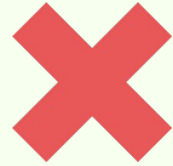


## OUR RECOMMENDED APPROACH

- Simple phone until at least the end of Year 9
- Delay social media until 16
- Internet & WhatsApp access via a shared family computer
- Track with an Airtag if you want to know where they are



**SMARTPHONE**



**SOCIAL MEDIA**



**SIMPLE  
PHONE**



**FAMILY COMPUTER**





# PARENTAL CONTROLS AREN'T THE SOLUTION

- Even the most tech-savvy parents struggle to manage parental controls
- Some apps require updates to hundreds of settings to make them age appropriate
- Even if your child's phone has parental controls, their friends may not so they may be sent inappropriate content regardless

**58%**

of teens say they've never had controls put on their phone by parents

(Parentkind poll, May 2024)

**47%**

of teens with controls in place say they have bypassed them

(Parentkind poll, May 2024)

And teens find multiple ways to bypass controls:

Performing a factory reset

Using VPN software

Hacking the WiFi router

Memorising your passcode





# THE PARENT PACT

makes collective  
action simple





**The Parent Pact is an online tool that helps parents agree to delay with others in your community. The more of us who sign, the more powerful it becomes.**

Step 01.

**Select your region & child's school**



Step 02.

**Sign the Pact to delay until the end of Year 9**



Step 03.

**View results for your region, school & class**



**National (UK)**

**71,077**

CHILDREN

**9,453**

SCHOOLS



# THE MOVEMENT IS GROWING ACROSS THE UK

# 90,057

Parent Pacts have been signed since  
launching in September





# IT'S HAPPENING IN [ENTER YOUR COUNTY NAME]

1456

Parent Pacts have been  
signed in the West Midlands

4

Parent Pacts have been  
signed in Alderbrook School

SCHOOL NAME	PACTS
Dartington CE Academy, Dartington ↗	125
Blundell's School, Tiverton ↗	105
St Peter's CE Primary School, Budleigh Salterton ↗	82
Woolacombe School Woolacombe ↗	71
St Peter's Preparatory School, Lymington ↗	46
Trinity CE Primary School, Exeter ↗	39
Landscope CE Primary School, Landscope ↗	31





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



# WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

**Navigating the fast changing world of smartphones and social media is complex.**

This stuff's tricky, the evidence is evolving fast, and every family is different.

Wherever you sit on the spectrum, or whatever decisions you've made for your children, respect your position.

Every family will come to their own conclusions; we just want to open up a conversation about these issues.

It's a new frontier of parenting, and we're all in it together.





# Fun-filled Childhood

An alternative to screen based play

- We hold monthly Saturday afternoon activity based meet-ups at the Lickey Hills
- We are planning to hold a Fun-filled Childhood Festival in the summer



## West Midlands SFC regional meetings

Cosy Coffee in Northfield – next one this Thursday 9.15am-11.30am  
(arrive when you can)

- ⚡ Join the regional SFC What's App group
- ⚡ Join/Create a What's App group for your child's school within the SFC What's App community
- ⚡ Sign the pact
- ⚡ Spread the word





Let's keep  
talking





# **SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD**

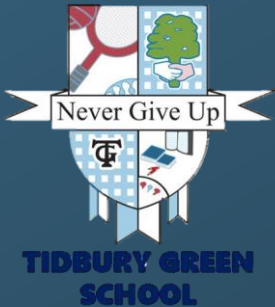
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# The impact of smartphones for primary school children

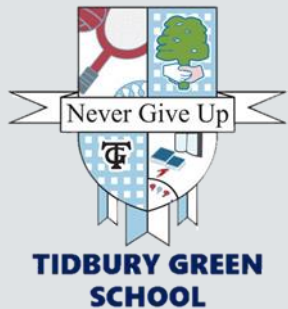


**Ros Fitter**  
**Headteacher**  
Tidbury Green School

# The Primary Perspective

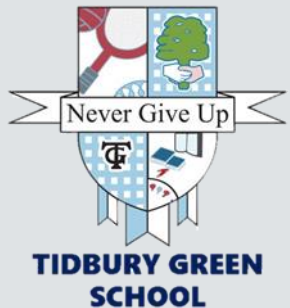
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- A primary school perspective
- A parent perspective

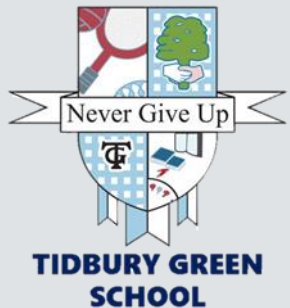




# A primary school perspective

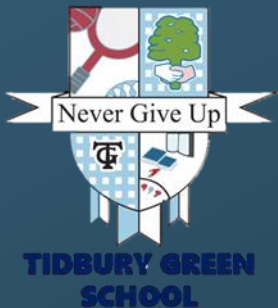


# A parent perspective



# “Together, we can do so much”

Helen Keller





# Mobile Phone Free School



Keeping students **safe** in school

Allowing students to focus on being children  
– learning to **socialise** and **play**

Enabling students to **focus on learning**  
without distraction



# Secondary School Impact



Most incidents from the community involve a smart phone

Boundaries with children

Algorithms mean that children access too much, too soon

Risk taking - real life vs online



# Questions

