



Friday 14 February 2025

Dear parents and carers,

As we approach the half term break I would like to take the opportunity to write to you following some feedback we have recently received via the cycle of our parent consultation evenings on how to support children and parents with the conundrum of healthy mobile phone use.

As we navigate an increasing digitalised world, it is important to foster a healthy balance between access to devices and the inevitable risks which increased screen time brings. Excessive screen time has been linked to various concerns, including disrupted sleep patterns, decreased physical activity, and potential impacts on mental health.

Statistically, between 2020 and 2022, research has shown that there has been a 52% increase in children's screen time (publications.parliament.uk). Likewise, a 2024 government report highlighted that nearly a quarter of young people use smartphones in a manner consistent with behavioural addiction. (vodafone.co.uk)

These statistics underscore the importance of monitoring and managing children's smartphone usage to promote healthy habits and well-being. In order to support the balance of productive screen time with your child's well-being, parents and carers may consider the following strategies:

1. **Engage in Open Conversations:** Discuss the importance of balanced screen time and encourage your child to share their online experiences. This dialogue can help set mutual expectations and promote responsible usage.
2. **Monitor Usage:** Keep track of how often your child picks up their device and the time spent on specific apps, games, and websites. This awareness can help identify areas where adjustments may be beneficial.
3. **Establish Screen-Free Zones:** Consider implementing boundaries such as no phones at the dinner table or no devices in the bedroom after bedtime. These practices can also encourage family interaction and promote better sleep hygiene.
4. **Set Device Restrictions During School Hours (see guidance below):** Encourage your child to turn off their phone and place it at the bottom of their bag during school hours to minimize distractions.
5. **Limit Contact During School Hours:** Avoid contacting your child during school hours unless it's an emergency. This practice respects their learning environment and reduces unnecessary interruptions.
6. **Implement Downtime Limits:** Set specific times when devices are to be turned off, such as during family activities or before bedtime. This routine can help establish healthy boundaries and promote quality family time.
7. **Encourage Offline Activities:** Promote hobbies and activities that don't involve screens, such as reading, outdoor play, or creative pursuits. Engaging in these activities can enhance your child's social skills and physical health.

By implementing these strategies, we can help our children develop a balanced and resilient approach to technology, ensuring it serves as a tool for learning and growth rather than a source of stress or distraction. The guidance below may also support parents and carers in implementing this.

Parental Controls on an iPhone – A Quick Guide for Parents

Keeping your child safe online is crucial. iPhones come with built-in parental controls that allow you to manage screen time, restrict content, and control app usage. Follow this step-by-step guide to set up **Screen Time** and parental controls on your child's iPhone.

1. Set Up Screen Time & Parental Controls

1. **Go to Settings** → Tap **Screen Time**
2. Tap **Turn On Screen Time**, then **Continue**
3. Choose **This is My Child's iPhone**
4. Set a **Screen Time Passcode** (different from the phone unlock code)

2. Set Downtime (Limit Phone Use at Night or during school time)

1. In **Screen Time**, tap **Downtime**
2. Turn it **On** and set a schedule (e.g., 9 PM - 7 AM)
3. Choose whether certain apps (like calls) are **Always Allowed**

3. Set App Limits (Restrict Social Media & Games)

1. In **Screen Time**, tap **App Limits** → **Add Limit**
2. Select categories (e.g., **Social Media, Games, Entertainment**)
3. Set a daily time limit (e.g., 1 hour per day)
4. Tap **Add**

Many other functions can be toggled off to Restrict Explicit Content & Age-Appropriate Apps, Restrict Purchases & Downloads, Limit Communication (Contacts, Messages, FaceTime), Enable Find My iPhone (Track Your Child's Location). **Tip:** Always set a Screen Time Passcode so only you can change these settings.

For more support, visit **Apple's official parental controls guide:** support.apple.com. This guide helps ensure a **safe and balanced** use of technology for your child while allowing them to enjoy their iPhone responsibly.

Parental Controls on an Android Phone – Quick Guide for Parents

Keeping your child safe online is essential. Android devices offer built-in parental controls through **Google Family Link** and **Digital Wellbeing** to help you manage screen time, restrict content, and control app usage. Follow this step-by-step guide to set up parental controls on your child's Android phone.

How to set Up Google Family Link (Best for Remote Monitoring)

Google Family Link allows you to monitor your child's device, set screen time limits, approve or block apps, and track location.

How to Set It Up:

1. **Download & Install Google Family Link**
 - On your phone: Install **Google Family Link for Parents** from the Play Store.
 - On your child's phone: Install **Google Family Link for Children & Teens**.

2. **Open Family Link on your phone** → Tap **Get Started**
3. Select **Your Child's Google Account** (or create one if needed)
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to link the accounts
5. Once linked, you can manage settings remotely from your phone

Key Features You Can Control in Family Link:

- Set daily screen time limits
- Approve or block apps
- Filter content & restrict explicit websites
- Track your child's location

How to set Screen Time Limits (Using Family Link or Digital Wellbeing)

1. **Go to Settings** → Tap **Digital Wellbeing & Parental Controls**
2. Select **Dashboard** → Choose an app to set a time limit
3. Tap **Set Timer** and choose daily limits
4. To schedule bedtime restrictions, go to **Bedtime Mode**

How to restrict App Downloads & In-App Purchases

1. **Open Google Play Store** → Tap **Profile Icon (Top Right)**
2. Select **Settings** → **Family** → **Parental Controls**
3. Turn **Parental Controls On** and create a **PIN**
4. Set restrictions for:
 - **Apps & Games** (e.g., limit to age-appropriate apps)
 - **Movies, TV, and Books**
 - **Music with explicit content**
5. Under **Require Authentication for Purchases**, select **For all purchases** to prevent unapproved spending

Many other functions can be toggled off to Block Explicit Content & Unsafe Websites, Enable Safe Search & Google Safe Browsing, Track Your Child's Location, Set Up Emergency Contact & SOS Features **and** Set Up WiFi & Data Restrictions.

Tip: Always **set a PIN or password** for parental controls to prevent unauthorised changes. For more support, visit **Google Family Link Help:** families.google.com

Finally, our mobile device policy exists to protect all students and staff, ensuring a safe, focused, and respectful learning environment. Mobile phone use in school presents safeguarding risks, cyberbullying concerns, and distractions to teaching and learning, and we must enforce this rule consistently across the school community.

Where students are not able to manage this appropriately in school or repeatedly breach the policy, we defer to our [Behaviour and Engagement Policy](#). In a small number of cases we may also ban a student from bringing a device onto school site for the benefit of their own and others continued learning.

Yours sincerely

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