

A group of diverse children are playing outdoors. In the foreground, a child in a red and white striped shirt is looking up. To their right, a child in an orange shirt is also looking up. In the background, another child is holding a pink marker and drawing on a piece of paper. The scene is bright and sunny, with a blue sky and green grass visible. The text "SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD" is overlaid in a bold, green, sans-serif font at the top center.

**SMARTPHONE
FREE CHILDHOOD**

Let's talk: raising kids in the smartphone era

PARENT TALK - December 2025



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



In two decades, everything's changed

2005



2025



2005

**Nokias ruled...
texts, calls & snake**

2007

**The first
iPhone launches
"A computer in
our pocket"**

2012

**4G UK launch,
internet always
available,
everywhere**

2020s

**Explosion of short-
form content & AI
powered algorithms**

2025

**Smartphones have
transformed
society... and
childhood**



Smartphones have become 'normal' for kids



Age
6-7

1 in 3

children have a
smartphone



Age
9

Average age

a child gets a
smartphone in
the UK



Age
12

90%

of children have
a smartphone



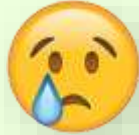
Nobody is happy with the status quo



94%

of **primary school parents** think smartphones are harmful

PARENTKIND POLL
2024



33%

of **parents of children with smartphones** have cried over their child's phone obsession

HMD POLL
2024



87%

of **teachers** agree for teens the negatives of smartphones outweigh the benefits

TEACHER TAPP SURVEY
2025



67%

of **16-18 year olds** think smartphones are harmful

PARENTKIND POLL
2024



Doctors are speaking up too

“I believe this is the most **urgent public health issue** of our time.”



Dr Rangan Chatterjee

NHS GP, AUTHOR, BROADCASTER

“**Every day doctors see the damage** smartphones are doing to children’s mental health and wellbeing.”



Dr Susie Davies

NHS GP AND CAMPAIGNER;
FOUNDER OF PAPAYA PARENTS



The only winners are the tech companies

The Attention Economy

We don't pay them.
The more **time** we spend, the
more **money** they make.



Attention = Profit

The business model of social
media giants is based on
addiction

Tech companies make

\$40B+

per year from under 18s*

The attention economy profits from lost childhoods

* Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health study, 2023 - \$11B of revenue for US; \$43B is extrapolated to a global figure for 2025



It can feel like an impossible position

Either we...

Give our children an addictive product



Or we...

Risk alienating them from their peers



It's a lose-lose: for parents, young people & society



This problem is why the conversation started



2,917 425

daisygreenwell UPDATE - join us on this journey to unite parents, change the social norm and force government to protect our kids @smartphonefreechildhood

I was chatting to another mum at our school recently and she told me that her 11yr old son has a smartphone, as do a third of the class in year 6. She hasn't got her other 8yr old child one yet because they haven't asked.

This conversation has filled me with terror. I don't want to give my child something that I know will damage her mental health and make her addicted. but I also know that the pressure to do so if the rest of her class have



- Two mums started a WhatsApp group
- It went viral on Instagram
- 1000s joined in days, across the UK



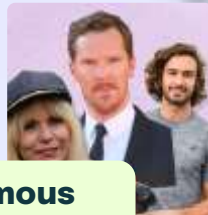
Smartphone Free Childhood is now a global movement

Feb 2024

**SFC began
after that
WhatsApp
group went
viral in Feb
2024**



**Hundreds of
thousands of
parents**



**Famous
supporters**



**1000+ local
organisers**

13,750
Schools covered

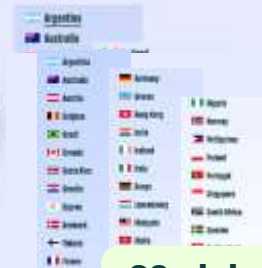
**Parents in
40% of UK
schools**

Oct 2025

**SFC is now a
national
charity and
leading global
movement**

**Every UK
county**

**32 global
groups**





SFC isn't anti-tech, it's pro-childhood

**Delay
smartphones
until at least 14**



SMARTPHONE

**Delay social
media until at
least 16**



SOCIAL MEDIA

**A simple phone
to stay in
contact**



SIMPLE PHONE

**Shared access
to a family
computer**



**FAMILY
COMPUTER**

**Alternative
trackers
(or go without)**



TAGS OR GPS



**Let's dig into
the issue**



We all want the same for our children



**Happy
today**

*Enjoy a happy,
healthy childhood*



**Thriving
tomorrow**

*Grow into confident,
capable adults*



**Safe
always**

*Stay safe as they
explore the world*



We all want the same for our children



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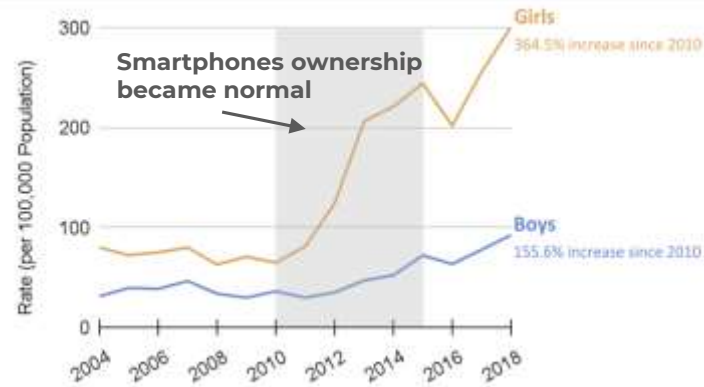
Smartphones make this all harder – and the data shows it



**Happy
today**

We're facing a teen mental health crisis

UK 10-12 year olds, self-harm episodes



Cybulski et al, 2021



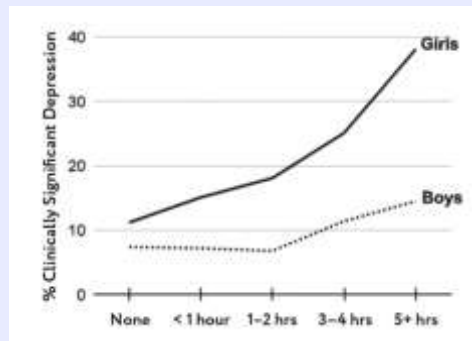
**Happy
today**

Smartphones increase the likelihood of mental illness

3x

**Depression risk
& 2x anxiety risk**

Among teens with
problematic
smartphone use



King's College London, 2024

Millennium Cohort Study



**Happy
today**

**Smartphones are designed
to be addictive**

4-6 hours

**Average daily time teens
spend on smartphones**

Among UK 12-15 year olds;
nearly a full-time job



**Happy
today**

**Smartphones expose kids to
things they can't unsee**

51%

**of 13 year olds have seen
violent, hardcore porn**

BBFC report, 2022

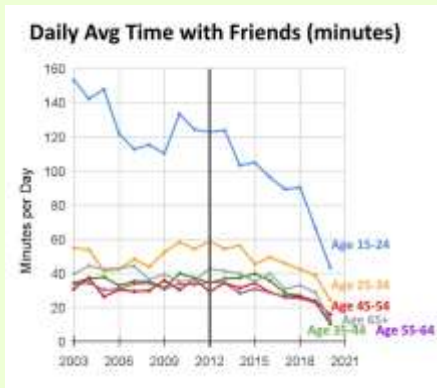


**Thriving
tomorrow**

Smartphones displace real world activities & connection

↓ 65%

**Reduction in time
spent in real life with
friends**



Since smartphones became common in the 2010s



**Thriving
tomorrow**

Smartphones fragment children's attention

237

**notifications a day
on average**

Median average, Common Sense Media, 2023



Thriving tomorrow

Smartphones disrupt sleep - critical to healthy development

1 night / week
heavy social-media
users lose one night's
sleep each week

UK Millennium Cohort Study, 2019
(11,872 adolescents, age 13–15)

“Our teenagers are truly
addicted... The vast majority
of teenagers tell me they are
awake until the small hours
on their phones.”

“In 20 years of teaching I **have**
never before experienced so
many instances of children
falling asleep in lessons as
now.”

Teacher testimonies
shared with SFC, 2025



**Thriving
tomorrow**

**Smartphones lower
educational attainment**

1-2 grades higher

**GCSE grades among
schools with an effective
smartphone ban**



**Safe
always**

Smartphones make bullying harder to escape

24/7

Bullying in children's pockets

Issues no longer stop at the school gate; they can amplify and exacerbate overnight



**Safe
always**

**The sharing of under-age
nudes is an everyday reality**

**90% of girls
50% of boys
have been sent an
unwanted explicit image**



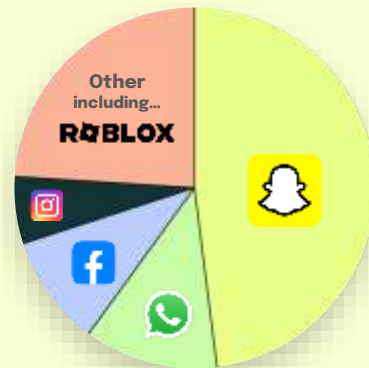
**Safe
always**

Smartphones have increased the risk of online grooming

A child is
60x
more likely to be
groomed online than
abducted from the
street

Groomers go where kids are

% of reported incidents



NSPCC 2024

NSPCC FOI, 2023/4
(7,062 reported online grooming cases);
Home Office / PACT / CEOP
(116 estimated stranger child abductions 2024/5)



Smartphone-free kids have more chance to



Have happier childhoods

*Better mental health
More time for play
More presence*



Thrive in the future

*Stronger social skills
Better concentration
Improved school results*



Be safe as they grow up

*Less exposure to harm
Less exposure to predators
Lower likelihood of bullying*



There's a lot of talk about the law needing to change

'Enough is enough': Fed up PM confirms nationwide social media ban - and reveals how it will work

Anthony Albanese has revealed how a nationwide age-based ban on social media websites, including Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook, will work

Education

Children's exposure to harmful online content a 'public health crisis', says Minister

Stricter laws may be needed to safeguard young people, according to Stephen Donnelly



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France

France to trial ban on mobile phones at school for children under 15

'Digital pause' experiment at 200 secondary schools could be extended nationwide in January

Kim Willsher in Paris

Follow Kim Willsher



The Ministry for Education is planning a nationwide trial of a ban on mobile phones in schools for children under 15, aimed at reducing distraction and cyberbullying. Anthony Albanese, PM, 2024

Carl O'Brien

ve that is intended to
id children's mental

ire schools in the
ones by July 1, 2026,
e by children in

THE IRISH TIMES

Education

Mobile phones set to be banned across all

at scho



By Shawn
Shawn Hall
York

Newsom
school dis
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ould follow Australia in
g social media for
teenagers

ers are considering ways to stop children
accessing harmful content online, citing the
impact on mental health

Oliver Wright, Rachel Sykes
Friday September 13 2024, 3:50pm, The Irish Times

The New York Times

California Schools Must Restrict Phones Under New Law Signed by Newsom

Calls for crackdowns have mounted with reports of cyberbullying and studies indicating that smartphones are harmful to children's mental health.

Update in this article: 11:42 AM, 10/10/2024

Share on Facebook



are open to a
ig social media
r warned that
was likely to be

children's e
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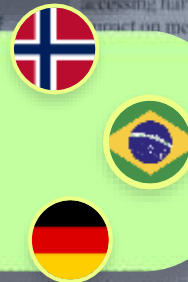
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**There's a lot of talk about
the law needing to change**



**Some countries are
making progress**

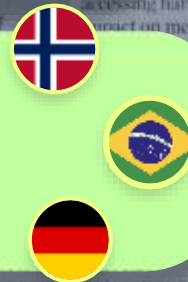




**There's a lot of talk about
the law needing to change**



**Some countries are
making progress**



**But the radical change we need
won't happen in time for our kids**



**The solution is to
work together**



If enough of us agree to delay
giving our children smartphones
the **peer pressure reduces.**

Acting alone can feel impossible,
but **together we're powerful.**



SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD

PARENT PACT

163,497

UK children signed up

13,984

UK schools covered

**The
PARENT PACT
makes acting
together
simple**



The more of us who sign, the more powerful it becomes

STEP 01

Search for your
child's school

SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD
PARENT PACT

Select your school ▾

Select your school year ▾

Name

STEP 02

Sign the Pact to delay
until at least 14

SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD
PARENT PACT

**Sign the
PARENT PACT**

Sign now >

STEP 03

View results for your
region, school & class

SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD
PARENT PACT

National (U)

158,630

CHILDREN

13,750

SCHOOLS

Sort by:
Leaderboard

Region name

REGION	PACTS
Bedfordshire ▾	937
Berkshire ▾	3286
Bristol ▾	2510
Buckinghamshire ▾	2911
Cambridgeshire ▾	2936



It's starting to happen in Fir Tree

4,417

Parent Pacts have been signed in
Oxfordshire

10

Parent Pacts have been signed
in **Fir Tree**

**25% of a class =
BREAKTHROUGH POINT**



What if my child already has a smartphone?



**Take an interest
& have open
conversations**



Set clear boundaries

- No phones overnight
- Screen-free meals
 - App time limits
- Delay social media



**Review your own
smartphone
behaviours**



**Invest in parental
controls & monitor
constantly**



Parental Controls are important but not the solution

**Most kids don't
have parental
controls**

58%

of teens say
they have never
had parental
controls

Parentkind Poll,
May 2024

**If you have them, invest time
understanding how kids get
around them**

47%

of teens with
controls have bi-
passed them

Parentkind Poll,
May 2024

Performing a factory reset

Using VPN software

Hacking the router

Memorising your passcode

Using a proxy





If you still have questions...



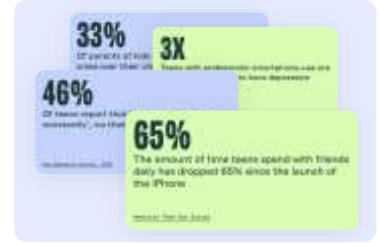
**Find answers
to common
questions**



**Explore 'Child-
friendly' phone
options**



**Learn how to
talk to kids
about
smartphones**



**View the latest
data and
research**

SMARTPHONEFREECHILDHOOD.ORG



What next?

Join the conversation

Join the SFC school
Whatsapp group



Sign the
THE PARENT PACT



Get involved in SFC

Spread the word in your
class and beyond





Questions for the room



What are your thoughts about the Parent Pact? What are your concerns about it?



What are your biggest concerns about managing the transition to smartphones and social media?



What else could we be doing to help our children around this topic?