

Vision

At West Lodge each child finds the spark within them. The light continues to grow, igniting the spark in others -creating ripples throughout the world. It all starts with understanding and acceptance....

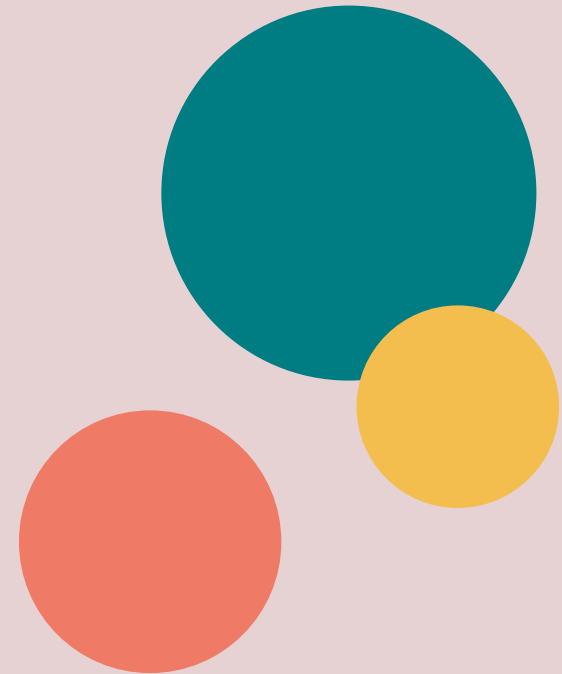
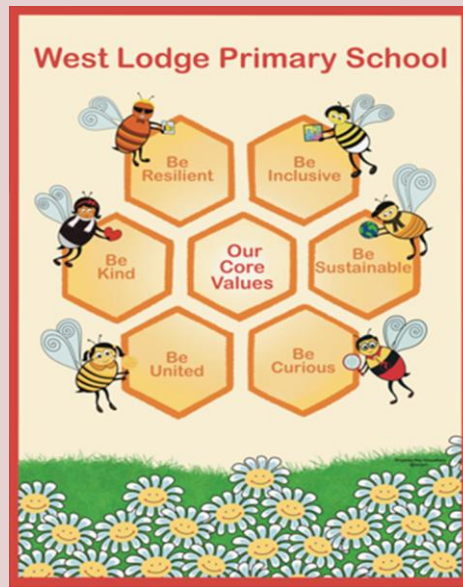




Growing Up in a Digital World

Helping our children thrive — online and offline

**Our job is not to remove the digital world.
It is to help children learn to navigate it.**



Childhood has changed

Digital experiences are now woven through children's everyday lives

VIDEO

YouTube and streaming

GAMES

Games and virtual worlds

CHAT

Messaging and group chats

SOCIAL

Social media

SCHOOL

Learning platforms

DEVICES

Phones, tablets and watches

They may know how to use it.

That does not necessarily mean they know how to manage it.

Not all screen time is equal

Look at the quality, context and impact — not only the clock

1

CREATE

Films • coding •
art • music

2

CONNECT

Family • friends •
shared play

3

LEARN

Reading • research
• programmes

4

CONSUME

Watching •
scrolling • short
video

5

COMPULSIVE

'One more' • losing
track of time

Ask three questions

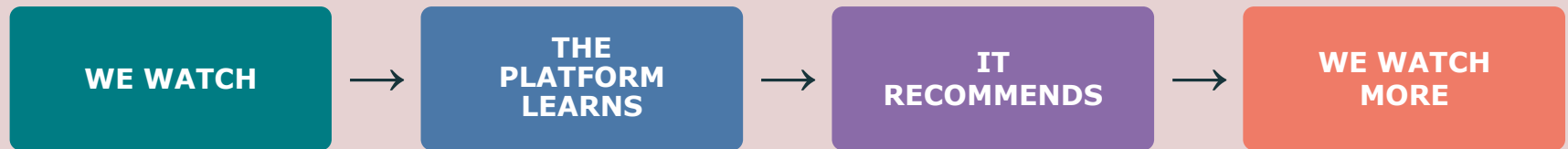
What were you doing?

What did it replace?

How did it leave you feeling?

The battle for our attention

What appears next is often designed to keep us engaged



Infinite scroll

No natural stopping point



Autoplay

The next video starts for us



Notifications

Repeated prompts to return



Likes, streaks & rewards

Reasons to check again

Children are using products designed by adults to be extremely engaging.

Gaming: more than 'just playing'

Understand both the opportunities and the environment

What gaming can offer

Creativity

Problem-solving

Teamwork

Perseverance

Friendship

Fun

Questions parents need to ask

- ? Who can communicate with my child?
- ? Can strangers make contact?
- ? Are there purchases or random rewards?
- ? Is content created by other users?
- ? **What happens when it is time to stop?**

Playing with known friends is different from playing with strangers who happen to be online.

Understanding age labels

Different labels answer different questions

13+

**Platform
minimum age**

When a standard
account may be
created

12

PEGI rating

Suitability of the
game's content

APP

App-store rating

The store's
classification of an
app

MILD

Content label

Maturity of a
particular
experience

**READY
?**

Family decision

Whether this child is
ready

An age label is a starting point — not a guarantee that something is safe or suitable.

Also check: chat • strangers • user-created content • purchases • privacy

Phones and social media: is my child ready?

Age matters — but readiness matters too

Instead of asking only...

How old are they?

Also ask:

How ready are they?



**Follow agreed
boundaries**



Stop when asked



**Protect personal
information**



**Question what they
see**



**Cope with exclusion
or unkindness**



**Tell an adult when
something goes
wrong**

A major change is coming

UK social-media restrictions for under-16s

15

JUNE 2026

**Government
announcement**

SPRING 2027

Expected implementation

AGE CHECKS

Stronger age assurance

PLATFORMS

**Responsibility sits with
companies**

SCOPE

**Final details still
developing**

Expected to cover major social platforms; messaging, education, music streaming and children's services may be treated differently.

Law alone will not be enough

Children will continue to encounter a wider digital world

GAMING

Virtual worlds and user-created content

MESSAGING

Chats, groups and disappearing messages

VIDEO

Streaming, influencers and trends

AI

Tools, chatbots and generated content

ADVERTISING

Persuasion, data and purchases

PEERS

Pressure, belonging and exclusion

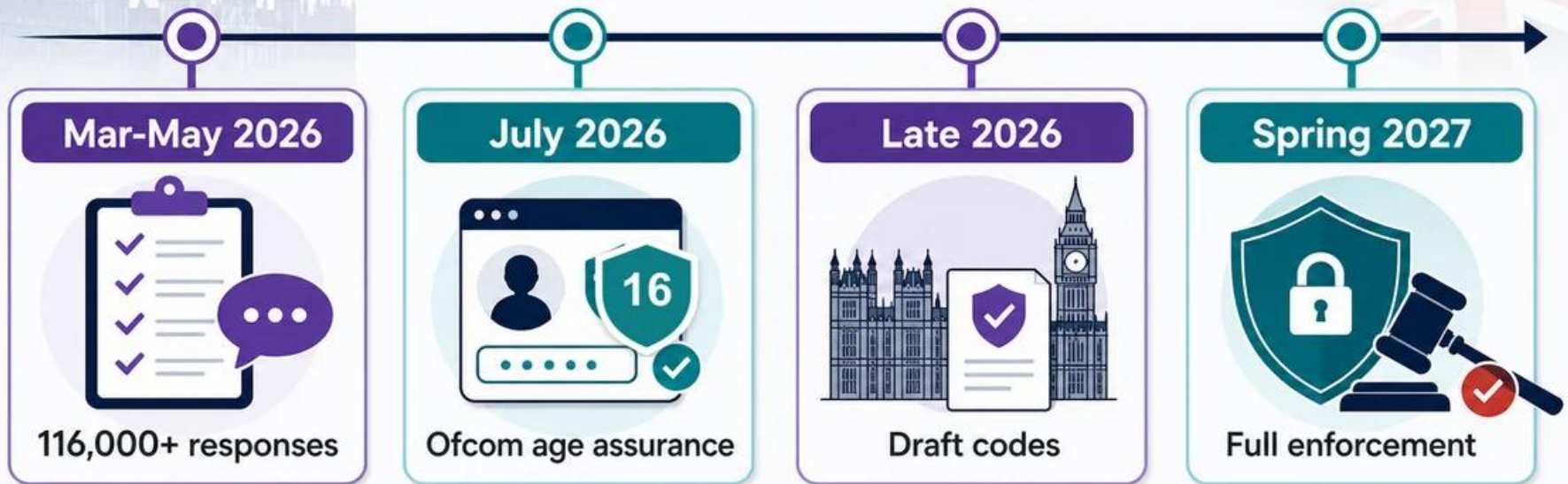
Legislation can create stronger protection.

It cannot replace conversation, boundaries and adult guidance.

UK SOCIAL MEDIA BAN TIMELINE



From consultation to enforcement



Protecting
children online



Proportionate
regulation



Industry
accountability



Safe, fair and
age-appropriate

Screen use in Reception

Purposeful, limited and balanced

Children learn best through play, movement, conversation and hands-on experiences.

DFE GUIDANCE FOR UNDER-FIVES

AGES 2–5

Up to

1 HOUR

**of screen time across the
whole day, less if possible**

Early years settings should use screens cautiously and intentionally, for specific learning and development aims.

OUR APPROACH AT WEST LODGE

Most of the Reception day is practical and play based, indoors and outdoors.

- ✓ **Technology has a clear educational purpose**
- ✓ **It enhances learning and adult interaction**
- ✓ **It supports children's development and wellbeing**
- ✓ **It never replaces active play, creativity or social interaction**
- ✓ **It is never used as a behaviour tool or passive time-filler**

THE WIDER PICTURE

The DfE is reviewing guidance for ages 5–16 and screen use in schools, alongside national action on mobile phones and under-16 social media.

Healthy

and

Unhealthy

Screen Time

Unhealthy

Screen Time

- more than 3 hours a day
- unsupervised use
- inappropriate content accessed
- no child lock or restrictions in place
- significantly reduces the amount of time spent enjoying free play or physical activity
- used during meals
- passive watching
- content causes anxiety, difficulty switching off, overstimulation or has a negative impact on mental health

Healthy

Screen Time

- up to 1 hour a day
- supervised use
- set rules and limits that are appropriate to the child
- parents are involved and are aware of what is being accessed
- parents engage with the child during screen time
- no screens at the table
- the child enjoys plenty of free play and physical activity as well as screen time
- content is educational or inspires play, discussions and interests

Digital life and wellbeing

Look at the whole child — and notice what is being crowded out



Notice changes in sleep, mood, secrecy, stopping and interest in other activities.

Don't just monitor — talk

Curiosity keeps communication open

Instead of...

**'What have you
been
doing on that
phone?'**

**Interrogation can close the
conversation.**

Try...

- > Show me what you're playing.
- > What do you enjoy about it?
- > Who do you play or talk with?
- > How does the app decide what to show you?
- > Have you seen anything that made you uncomfortable?
- > **What would you do if a stranger contacted you?**

We want children to come to us when something goes wrong — not hide it because they fear losing the device.

Five family habits that make a difference

Small, consistent routines are more powerful than occasional battles

1

Create screen-free spaces

Protect meals and family conversation.

2

Protect sleep

Charge devices outside bedrooms.

3

Agree boundaries early

Decide when, where and what can be used.

4

Take an interest

Sometimes play, watch and explore together.

5

Model healthy habits

Children notice our phone use too.

The goal

**Predictable family habits —
not perfect parenting.**

Set boundaries before problems occur, then revisit them as children and technology change.

Create a Family Digital Agreement

Build the rules with children — and revisit them as they grow

WHEN

When can technology be used?

WHERE

Where can devices be used?

WHAT

Which apps, games and content?

WHO

Who can we communicate with?

HOW

How will we manage privacy and purchases?

HELP

What will we do if something worries us?

The rules apply to adults too.

Review the agreement as children mature and technology changes.

Helping children navigate the digital world well

CURIOUS

Explore and question

RESILIENT

Cope when things go wrong

KIND

Treat others well online

INCLUSIVE

Help others belong

UNITED

Look out for one another

RESPONSIBLE

Make healthy choices

**The digital world will be part of our children's future.
Our role is to help them navigate it safely, confidently and wisely.**

UNDERSTAND IT → NOTICE THE IMPACT → TALK ABOUT IT → SET BOUNDARIES → MODEL IT

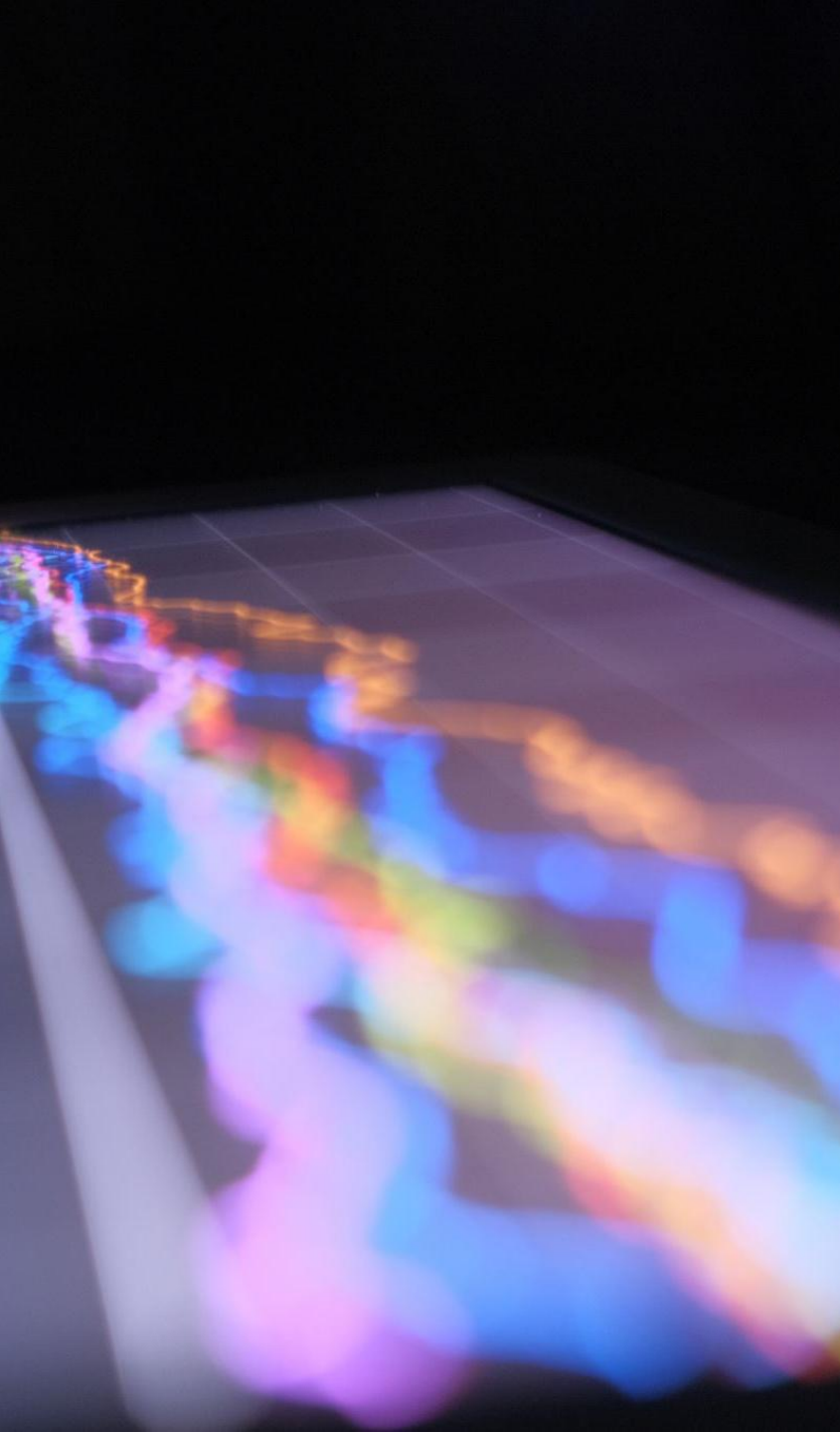
Raising Smartphone-Free Children:

A Guide to Healthy Digital Living



The Digital Landscape

- 1 in 3 children under 5 have access to smartphones.
- Average daily screen time for 8-12-year-olds: 5 hours.
- 60% of parents report concerns over the impact of screen time.



Why Encourage a Smartphone-Free Childhood?

- Protects focus and attention spans.
- Fosters imagination and face-to-face communication.
- Reduces dependency on technology for entertainment.





Harmful Content



Mental and Emotional Health



Addiction



Physical Health



Focus and Brain Changes

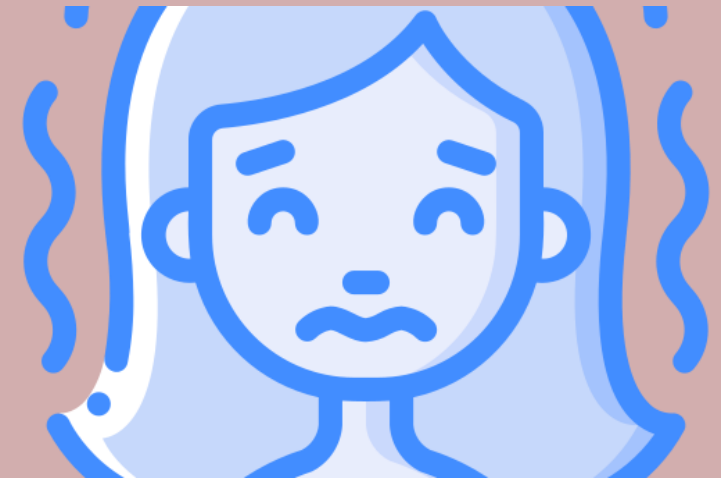


Social Development

The Negative Impact of Smartphones

The Impact of Smartphones on Development

- **Attention Span:** Frequent device use can shorten attention spans and affect learning.
- **Sleep:** Blue light from screens disrupts sleep cycles.
- **Mental Health:** Increased anxiety, low self-esteem, and social comparison.



How Smartphones Affect Social Development

- Less face-to-face interaction weakens communication skills.
- Risk of cyberbullying and online peer pressure.
- Less time for empathy and emotional connection.



Fostering Real-World Engagement

- Prioritise outdoor play, reading, and creative activities over screen time.
- Enrol children in sports, art classes, or community activities.
- Model smartphone-free behaviours as parents.
- Set up screen free challenges



How Social Media Affects Young Minds

- Mental Health & Self-Esteem
- Social Development
- Cyberbullying & Safety
- Distraction from Learning
- Addiction & Sleep Issues





In partnership with parents, West Lodge Primary school strongly recommends that to safeguard our children they should not be given a smartphone or smartwatch for their personal use.

If a child goes home alone in Year 5 or Year 6, a phone may be needed for communication between parent and child. If so we recommend a basic phone that does not have access to the internet but can be used for calls or texts.



The school will:

- support parents who choose to delay purchasing a smart phone for their child
- provide online safety education for all children and promote alternatives to smartphones
- not permit children to bring smartphones or smartwatches to school

Parents will:

- not give a smartphone or smartwatch to their child for their personal use
- not allow their child to access any apps or social media with an age rating beyond their age (this includes, but is not limited to, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok)
- monitor and supervise their child's internet use
- lead by example by being mindful of excessive screen time and engaging in face-to-face interactions wherever possible

Further Information

Smartphone Free Childhood

Smartphone Free Childhood is a parent-led movement on a mission to protect millions of children from the dangers of using smartphones too young.

<https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk>

Delay Smartphones

Delay Smartphones began as a pilot campaign for three Edinburgh Primary Schools at the end of 2023. They are now supporting other schools and parents across the country.

<https://delaysmartphones.org.uk/>

Useful links for families

Trusted advice, practical settings and support when something goes wrong

EVERYDAY GUIDANCE

- 1 Internet Matters**
Step-by-step parental controls, device guides and advice about apps, gaming and screen time
internetmatters.org
- 2 NSPCC Online Safety**
Advice for talking with children about phones, games, social media and difficult experiences online
nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety
- 3 UK Safer Internet Centre**
Parent and carer guides, family resources and practical online safety information
saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers

WHEN SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG

If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

CEOP

Sexual abuse or grooming

ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre

Report Harmful Content

Reporting harmful material

reportharmfulcontent.com

Childline

Confidential support for children

0800 1111 childline.org.uk