

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....



West Lodge Primary School



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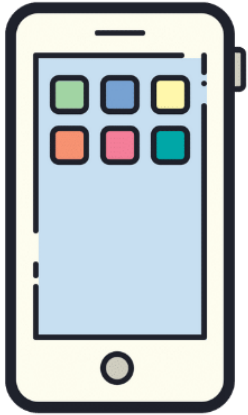


Raising Smartphone-Free Children:

A Guide to Healthy Digital Living

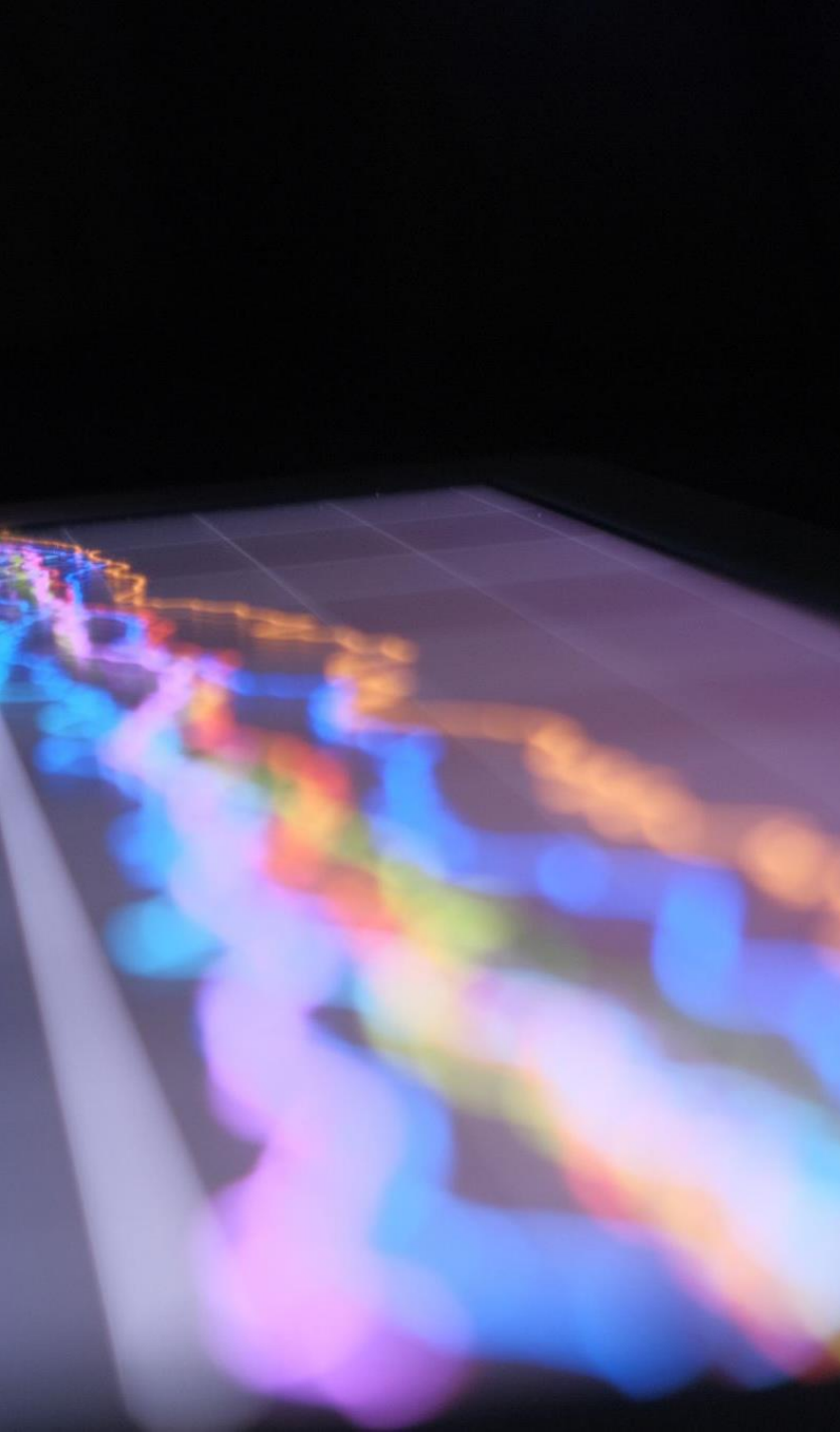


Safeguarding and Personal Devices



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.





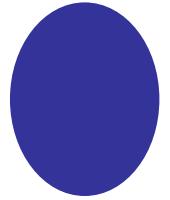
Setting Boundaries with Technology

- Create screen-free zones: bedrooms, mealtimes.
- Set time limits for device use (e.g., 30 minutes of entertainment time).
- Use a shared family calendar to track online activities.
- Create a family charter.



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.



Guide Children on Responsible Technology Use

- Teach digital literacy and online safety.
- Help them understand the importance of balance: technology as a tool, not a distraction.
- Encourage the use of educational apps over mindless scrolling or games.



How Social Media Affects Young Minds

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



What are the age restrictions on social media?



13

Facebook
Twitter
Instagram
Snapchat
TikTok
Kik
Ask.fm
Houseparty
Periscope
Tumblr
Reddit
Pinterest



13+

Whatsapp
YouTube
WeChat
Whisper
Yubo



(13+ means with parental consent)

16

LinkedIn



18

Tinder
Bumble



A

I will have to answer to my children.

I can't pretend that I didn't know the harm that smartphones would cause their developing minds and bodies.

I can make a different choice and delay smartphones for my children until at least 14.

We can make a different choice, together.



Hannah Oertel

Mother of children at South Morningside Primary

Founder of Delay Smartphones

Edinburgh, Scotland

Proposed Policy and Agreement





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.



ON HOLD
SMARTPHONES CAN WAIT

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

Alternatives



FAQs

“We know, but everyone else is getting them, we have no choice.”

The message we send to our children is as soon as you feel peer pressure, even if you know it is the wrong thing to do, give in.

“Can’t we just use a stripped back iPhone with parental controls?”

Unfortunately parental controls are incredibly easy to bypass. It takes a lot of intentional, consistent effort. It is difficult and constantly changing. Why take the risk when everything we need them to have can be done on a simple phone.

“But they will miss out on WhatsApp groups with their friends”

We believe and the research shows that Whatsapp groups are doing more harm than good, however if you really want your child to be in a Whatsapp group this can be accessed on an iPad or computer at home.

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/>

