



Hoole Church of England Primary School

Supporting Families - Managing Mobiles & Use of Technology

November 2024



In recent months there has been growing awareness of the harmful effects of smartphones on young people's well-being. New research has received extensive media coverage and thousands of parents have joined national campaigns such as [Smartphone Free Childhood](#), in a bid to delay giving smartphones to their children.

There is now a growing body of evidence linking smartphone use with [an array of harms](#). Smartphones are correlated with anxiety, depression and loneliness. They are a gateway to extreme content and unwanted communication. Research shows that smartphones affect academic performance and many children show signs of behavioural addiction to their devices.

Underpinning all these harms is one that is potentially the most significant of all. Smartphones are **experience blockers, distracting children from engaging in the real world**. The average UK 12-year-old now spends [29 hours a week](#) – equivalent to a part-time job – on their smartphone. This leaves little time for the real world activities and relationships that enable us to learn the essential life skills needed for the transition to adulthood.

It is not surprising that new research shows that the younger a child receives their first smartphone, [the worse their mental health](#). And yet, the age children are getting their first smartphone is getting younger and younger. In the UK, a fifth of 3-4 year olds own their own device and [24% of 5-7 year-olds](#) do.

At Hoole, from discussions with many parents/carers, we understand that many parents don't want to give their child a smartphone but feel they have no choice because everyone else is. No parent wants to isolate their child from their peer group. We understand how difficult this situation can be for families, with children desperate for mobile phones to 'fit in' or be the same as their classmates. We want to support parents/carers in managing this pressure.

We are starting our own family support group to help any parents/carers with managing this challenge.

Families are invited to attend a Parent-led coffee session on 14th November at 8.45am. Over refreshments, parents/carers may discuss how to manage this.

We hope to develop this forum to provide ongoing support and guidance to families. All are welcome to attend. Please come along and find out more.

WHY
DON'T
YOU

Why don't you..?

Some parents/carers (and grandparents) will remember a programme which was on during the school summer holidays called 'Why Don't You..? The theme tune sang "Why don't you switch off your television set and go out and do something less boring instead?" At Hoole, we have brought this tune slightly more up to date as "Why don't you switch off your television set or I-pad..." – We could also have added Xbox, Playstation, Nintendo Switch as well!

We talk regularly to children about how they have a choice to, for example, watch video after video on You Tube or go off and do something less boring instead. The something they may do instead could be something which makes them feel much proud.

As a result, we have had hundreds of pictures, craft work, sports trophies, certificates and models brought in to school to show when pupils have done just that – switched off their phones and technology and done something less boring instead.

We celebrate everything that is brought in and usually, discussing the achievement with children, we can see that they have also shown resilience, resourcefulness, enthusiasm and perseverance to bring their genius plans to life.

If your child has switched off their television set, mobile phone, X Box, Switch or Playstation and gone out and done something less boring instead – please make sure they let us know so we can celebrate this with them!

If you go for a walk,
your mental health
can get better!
Jack

If you just stay at home
watching videos you
won't feel proud at the
end of the day.
Trixie

If you spend too much
time on your Ipad, you
don't get the know
anyone else.
Elin

If you sit watching videos
for a long time you will
get a headache.
Matthew

It's fun and
good to
get out
and do
things!
Roman

