



Diocese of Birmingham
ST LAURENCE CHURCH JUNIOR SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mr Andrew Murphy

Friday 28th February 2025

Dear Parents / Carers,

We are currently working with a group of parents who are involved in the [Smartphone Free Childhood](#) campaign. This is a community of over 150,000 parents working together to change the culture around children and smartphones. They have a Parent Pact encouraging parents to delay giving their child a smartphone until 14 and are growing the national conversation about the harms of smartphones and social media.

The movement have made it their mission to provide solidarity, support and solutions to parents who are struggling with what's become one of the defining parenting challenges of our time. As a community of schools, both St. Laurence Infant and Junior School support this movement as we begin to witness some of the harms and impact overuse of smartphones causes by the end of their time at the junior school.

In order to support you as parents, we are putting on two workshops on Monday 17th March for parents to attend, listen and ask questions about this movement and the St. Laurence parent pact. In advance of that meeting, we are asking **all parents** to fill in this survey anonymously to give the presenters a better understanding of our context. <https://forms.gle/zXrK211h86z1XVyF6>. Please do fill this in even if you are unable to attend the workshops.

There will be two parent workshops and an assembly for the junior school children. For the workshops (both infant and junior parents welcome), please enter the junior school hall through the double doors at the side and sign in on the provided sheet:

- **Workshop 1 17/3/25 3:30pm**

We will put some colouring and activities on for children of parents in attendance (this will be in a separate room). Please note on the survey above whether childcare is required so we know the number of children to cater for.

- **Workshop 2 17/3/25 7:00pm**

Please note the pedestrian gates on Innage and Bunbury Road will be open to use.

We look forward to welcoming you into school on this date and working together on this challenging and complex issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mr. Murphy'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Mr Andrew Murphy
Headteacher, St. Laurence Church Junior School



Kids & smartphones – what’s the big deal?

When children first started getting smartphones a decade ago, there was no research about their impact. Now there is, and it’s overwhelming.



HARMFUL CONTENT

Smartphones act as a gateway to pornography, violent and extreme content. Often kids don’t seek them out but are exposed to them via algorithms and messaging apps. Once seen, these things can never be unseen. 90% of girls and 50% of boys say they’re sent explicit content they didn’t want to see.



ADDICTION

Tech companies intentionally make apps addictive, because the more time we spend, the more data they harvest, the more money they make. By leveraging dopamine circuits, they trigger brain responses akin to slot machine gambling. 1 in 4 young adults show signs of behavioural addiction to smartphones.



ACADEMIC DISTRACTION

The average teen receives 237 smartphone notifications a day – one every few minutes – making focusing on schoolwork hard. Studies show that excessive smartphone use has negative impacts on academic performance. Children at schools with effective smartphone bans get GCSE’s 1-2 grades higher.



GROOMING

Sites like TikTok, Snapchat and Roblox are used by sexual predators to target children with their first smartphones, blackmailing them into sharing sexual content. Sextortion is now the fastest growing crime against teens. Since 2022, there has been a 66% rise in ‘self generated’ sexual abuse imagery of children under 10.



CYBERBULLYING

Disagreements between pupils used to stop at the school gate, now they follow kids wherever they go. 24/7. Young people who experience cyberbullying are twice as likely to attempt suicide and self-harm. One in six teens report being cyberbullied in the past month, according to the World Health Organisation.



MENTAL ILLNESS

Rates of depression, anxiety and suicide in young people have spiked globally since 2010, when children first began getting smartphones. The first generation to grow up with smartphones are now adults – data shows that the younger they got their first smartphone, the worse their mental health today.



OPPORTUNITY COST

Underpinning all these harms is one that is potentially the most significant of all. For the first time in human history, children are spending more time on devices than they are playing – an activity crucial to our healthy development. 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 we need to transition into adulthood. The average daily time that teens spend with friends has plummeted by 65% since 2010.

Join the grassroots parents movement to protect childhood from Big Tech

www.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/join

For all links to stats references see www.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/the-problem