

# STAMFORD CYBERWISE CAMPAIGN

## STAMFORD CYBERWISE PARENT PLEDGE

1. No smartphones for primary aged children
2. No social media until (at least) 13
3. Parental controls until 16



The results of a recent huge study of young adults showed that the younger they were when they got their first smartphone, the worse their mental health is today



Scan to sign the pledge, or visit [theconversationstamford.co.uk](https://theconversationstamford.co.uk)

Smartphones are highly addictive devices that have a significant impact on our children's mental health by:

1. Reducing attention spans and academic performance
2. Reducing the quality and quantity of sleep
3. Exposing children and young people to harmful content
4. Discouraging traditional play and interaction
5. Exacerbating friendship issues and bullying behaviours.

Before smartphones, 5% of boys and 12% of girls experienced major depressive episodes in their teens. After smartphones (by 2022) this had increased to 12% of boys and nearly 30% of girls.

In 2019, the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of public health discovered that 12-15 year olds who used social media for over 3 hours were twice as likely to have mental health problems.

## **YOUR FAMILY PLAN**

A family plan is a set of rules and boundaries related to phone use that every member of the household adheres to. Decide the rules and boundaries *together* - it's you and your household versus phone addiction.

### **Things to consider:**

#### **Limit your evening and nighttime screen use**

Probably the most important boundary you can set is the time that devices get turned off in the evening - phones should be switched off 1-2 hours before sleep and left downstairs

#### **Schedule some screen-free time**

Many people have found that taking one day a week not linked into technology is extremely helpful, or maybe choose certain times of the day, or weeks of the year when the whole household has some screen free time. At the very least have a no phones at the table rule.

#### **Turn off notifications**

On most of the apps on your phones. Phones should not be allowed to interrupt every area of our lives - we should be in control of when we want to engage with our phones.

#### **Have a phone station**

Agree a place in your home where you keep your phones. Make it part of the getting in from work or school routine. This prevents us carrying around our phones and therefore being distracted and tempted to constantly multitask.

Once you have chatted through these areas with your family, write down what you have agreed and hold each other accountable.

As well as a family plan, as soon as you give your child a phone you must put in specific limits and controls, this is often referred to as scaffolding, but think of it as rungs on a ladder. They start at the bottom with tighter controls and limits and they progress up the ladder to digital independence. Please see our three suggested plans.

## **STEP 1 - FIRST INTRODUCTION (AROUND YEAR 7)**

Very strict limits

Internet browsing for **10 minutes** a day

A Few agreed apps

(No WhatsApp or streaming service or social media) - *music streaming, maps, audible, a couple of games or creative/artistic apps*

Notifications turned off for all apps

Permission required to download any apps

*As well as not allowing these apps to be downloaded, you will need to specifically block the websites using screentime controls*

Phone turned off between 7pm (1-2 hours before bedtime) and 7am and kept downstairs at bedtime - we would recommend physically taking the phone away during these times

The phone should have a place where it goes when your child is at home and not carried around the house. We would recommend a downstairs rule, and definitely not in their bedroom.

Overall total time limit of **1 hour** on all apps and categories

*You may wish to always allow certain apps such as maps or phone calls to certain numbers that override these limits*

**There are several apps you can use to digitally set these limits - Apple's family sharing and screentime settings and Google family link are very effective. For tutorials on how to do this on various devices, visit [internetmatters.org](http://internetmatters.org)**



## **STEP 2 - YEAR 8/9**

If boundaries have been respected, keep everything as step 1 with the following additions and increases;

Consider allowing whatsapp with a maximum time limit of **1 hour**

Internet browsing time to increase to **30 minutes** a day

Overall total time limit of **2 hours** on all apps and categories

Still no social media/youtube or streaming service on their phone - *these can be enjoyed at home on a family computer or tablet*

## **STEP 3 - YEAR 10 AND ABOVE**

Keep everything as step two, but potentially introduce the following;

Allow 1 social media limited to **30 minutes** (research suggests this is the optimal amount of time to reap the social media benefits but avoid potential harm)

You could also allow Youtube or a streaming service like Netflix but this should be limited to a total of **1 hour**

Internet browsing time to increase to **1 hour** a day

Overall total time limit of **2.5 hours** on all apps and categories

Even at this stage, ensure that you ban access to social media websites via their browser regardless of whether you have allowed the app or not

# OUR FAMILY PLAN

Evening and nighttime screen use

Screen-free time

Notifications

The phone station

The above rules are agreed by the whole household and as such we can hold each other accountable

Signed:

the  
conversation...  


