



# LET'S TALK ABOUT OUR KIDS AND THEIR SMARTPHONES

CHOOSING A DIFFERENT PATH FOR YOUR FAMILY

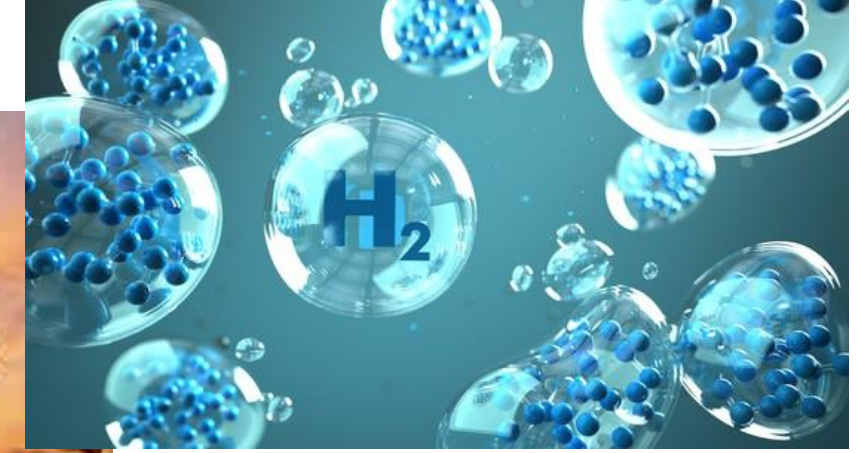
Hello

I'M

JEWELLER



# SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD

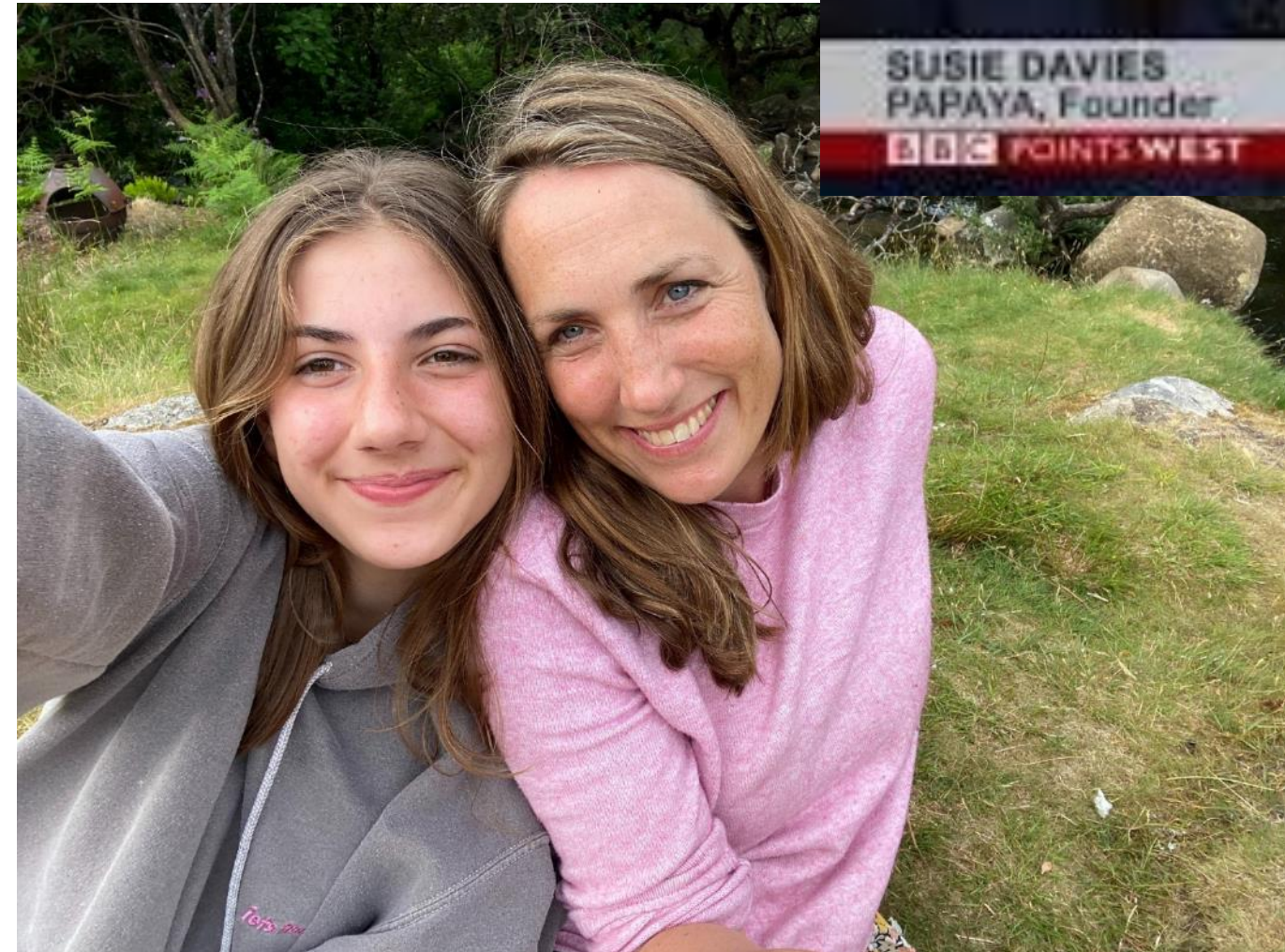


# PAPAYA



Parents Against Phone Addiction in Young Adolescents

Dr Susie Davies  
Bristol GP  
Founded PAPAAYA in 2018



**A FEW THINGS...**

**I'M NOT HERE TO  
TELL YOU WHAT  
TO DO**

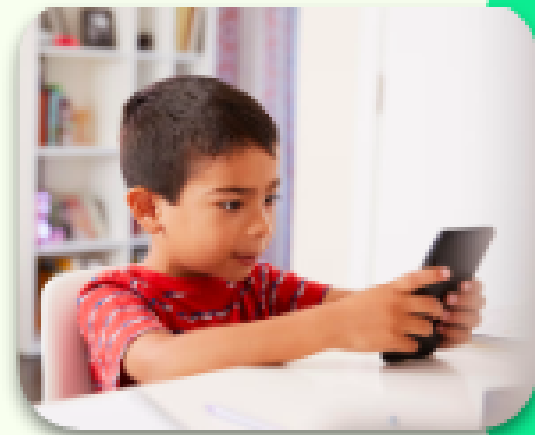
**IT'S NOT JUST  
SMARTPHONES**

**AND CAUSATION IS  
HARD TO PROVE**

**SOME TECHNOLOGY  
IS GOOD, ALL HAVE  
TRADE OFFS**

How much is too much?

# THE NUMBERS



**25%**

of 5-7 year olds  
in the UK own their  
own smartphone

**89%**

of 12 year-olds  
in the UK own their  
own smartphone



SOURCE: OFCOM Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes April 24

# SCREENTIME

The average UK 12-year-old spends  
**3 hrs 48 mins** a day online.

That's **26.6 hours** a week.

**58 days** a year.

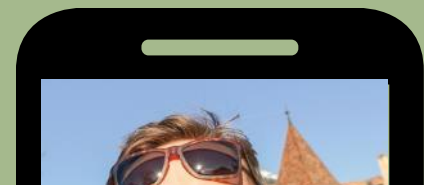
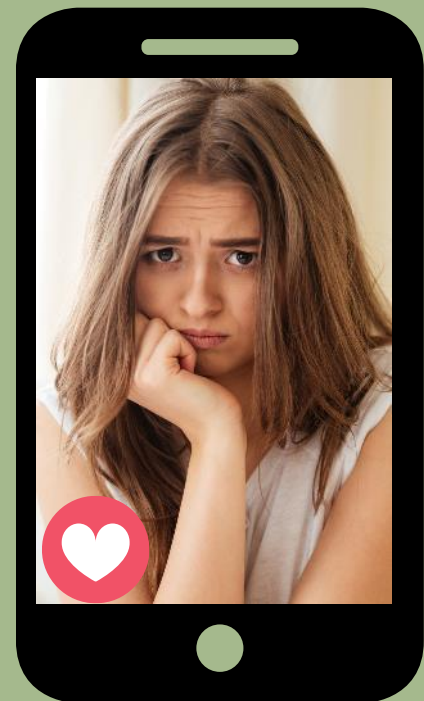
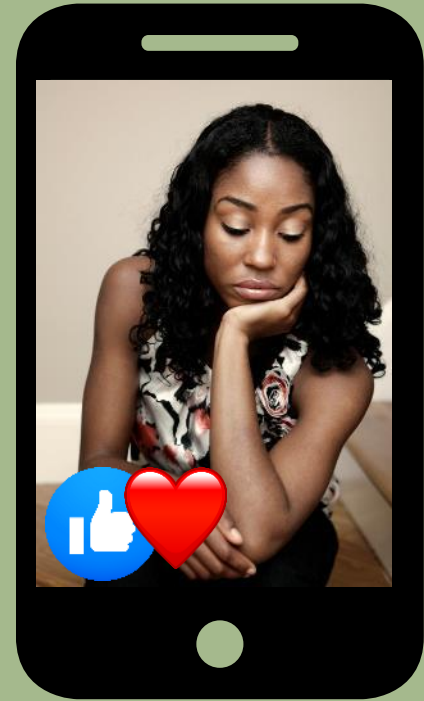
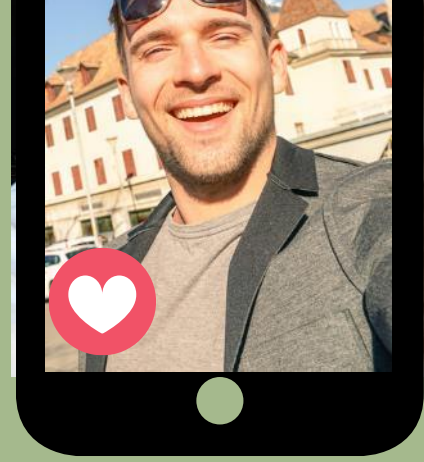
**11 years** over a lifetime.



# PERSUASIVE TECH

Smart technology taps into our dopamine reward pathway making us all vulnerable to overconsumption.

So powerful is persuasive tech that it has been described as being akin to involuntary hypnosis.





▶ Dopamine is released during a reward which provides a learning signal to the brain.

▶ The greater the 'unexpected' reward the greater the learning signal.

▶ The motivational aspect of dopamine means that it can motivate us to do things that are good for us as well as those that are not.

# TIMELINE

**EMAIL** widespread 1996

**Facebook founded** 2002

**First iPhone** 2007

**App Store** 2008

**Like button** & algorithmic news feeds on Facebook 2009

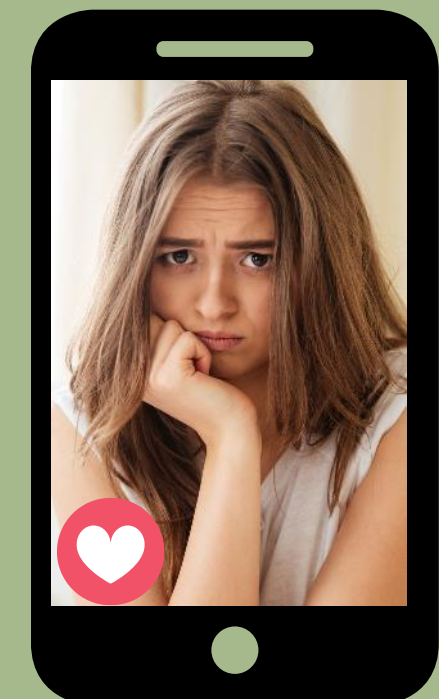
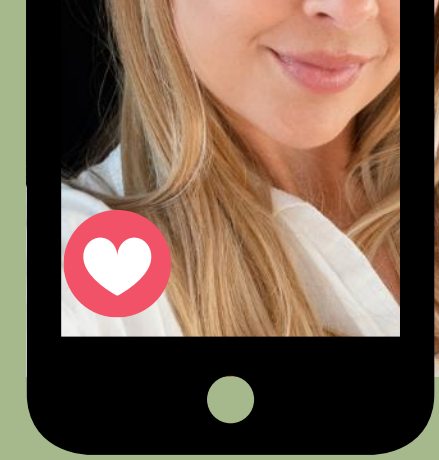
**Retweet** on twitter 2009

**Push notifications** 2009

**Front-facing** cameras 2010

**4G rollout** 2012-2013

**'Selfie'** Oxford Dictionary word of the year 2013



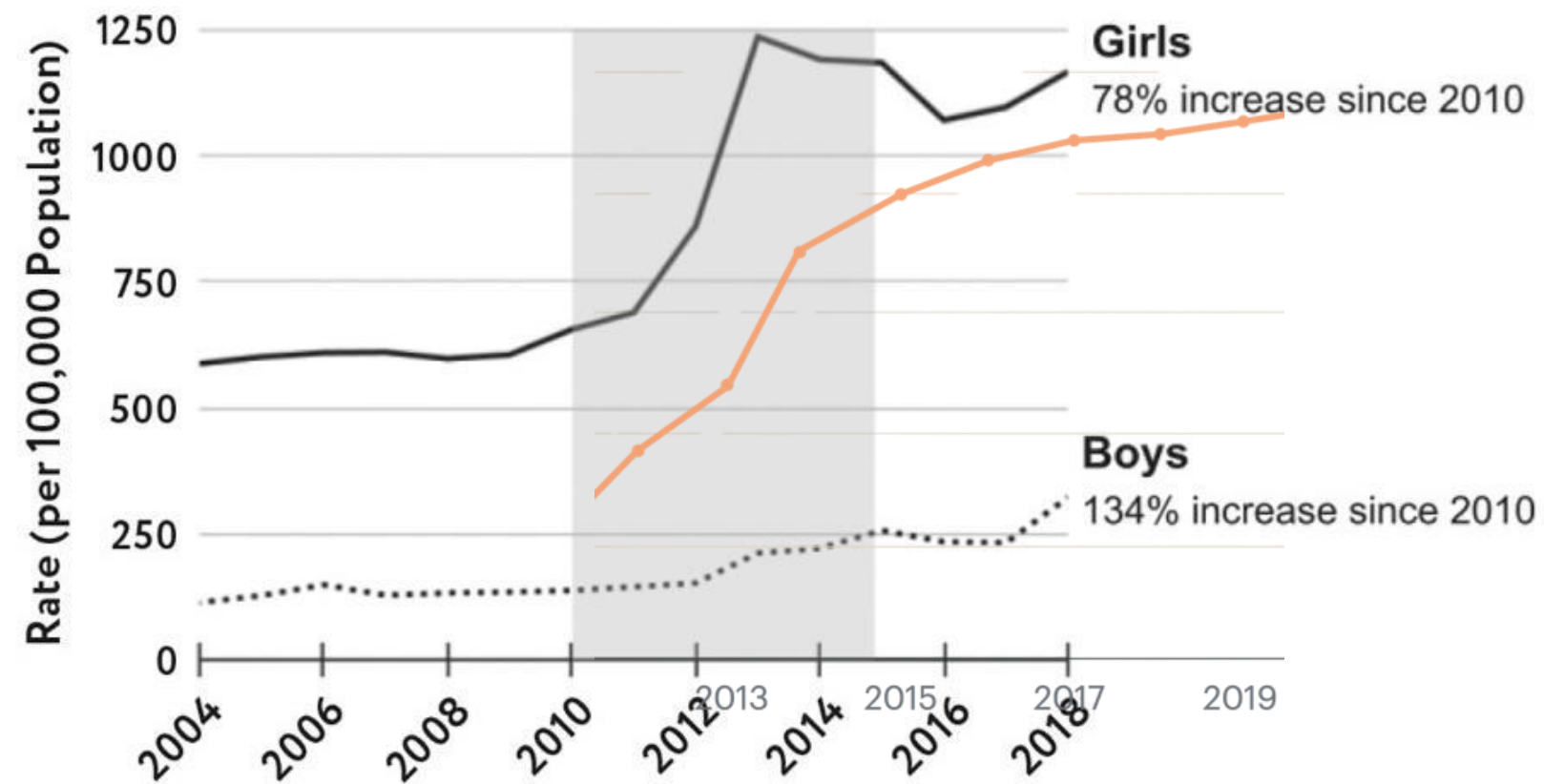


Children with **Problematic Smartphone Usage (PSU)**

are **twice** as likely to experience **anxiety** and **three** times as likely to experience **depression** compared to children without PSU

King's College London, 2024

## Self-Harm Episodes, U.K. Teens

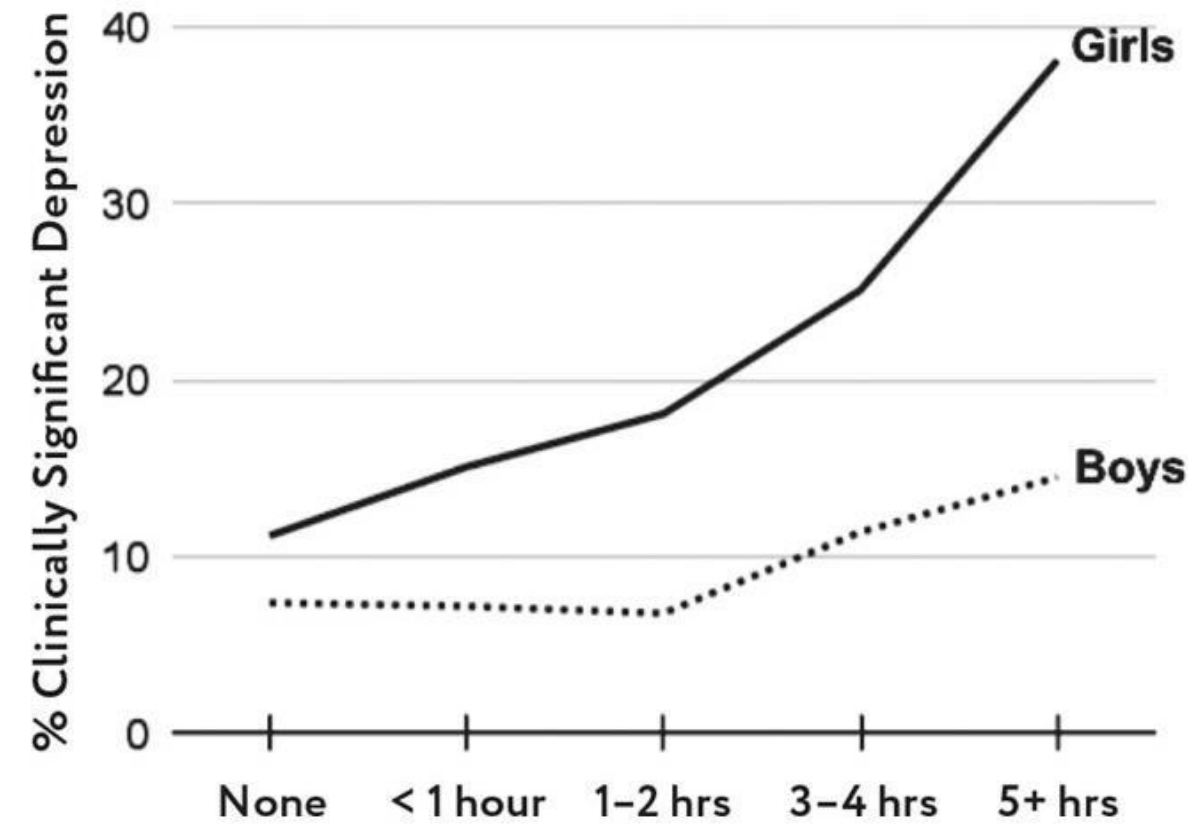


**Figure 1.9.** U.K. teens' (ages 13–16) self-harm episodes. (Source: Cybulski et al., 2021, drawing from two databases of anonymized British medical records.)<sup>51</sup>

## MENTAL HEALTH

According to NHS data in the past decade childhood outdoor accidents have reduced 70% but **self-harm has increased 93%.**

# Depression by Level of Social Media Use, U.K.



**Figure 6.2.** Percent of U.K. teens depressed as a function of hours per weekday on social media. Teens who are heavy users of social media are more depressed than light users and nonusers, and this is especially true for girls.

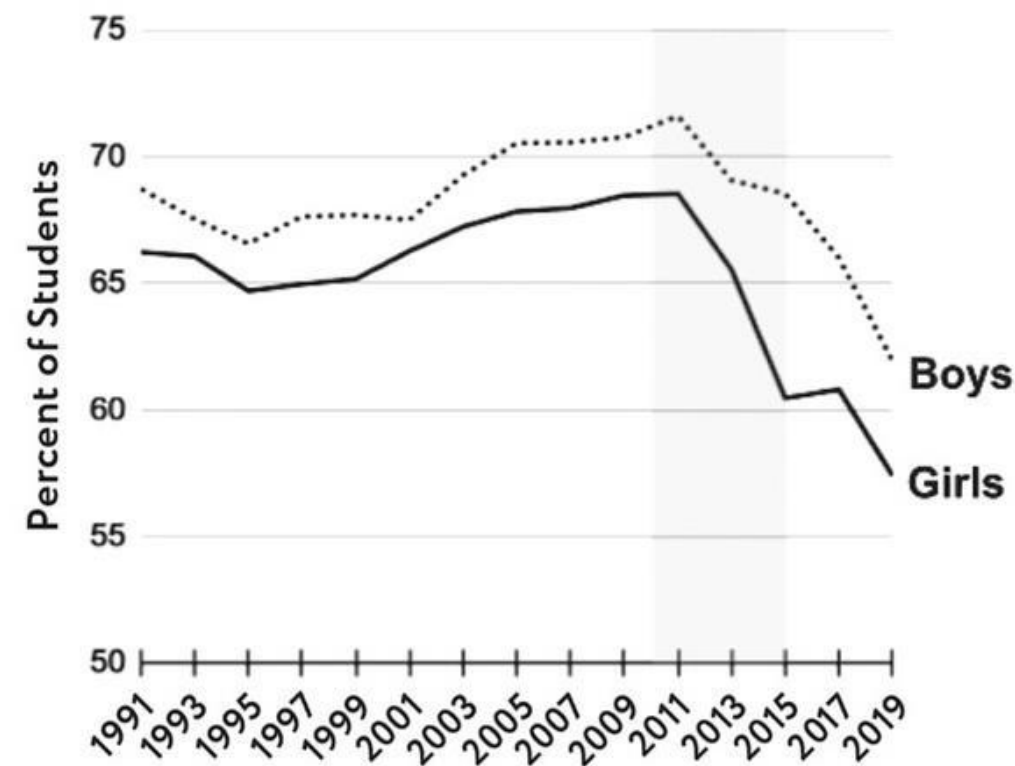
(Source: Millennium Cohort Study.)<sup>11</sup>



## WHY?

- ▶ Online comparison
- ▶ Self-esteem
- ▶ Social isolation and loneliness
- ▶ Cyberbullying, grooming, inappropriate content
- ▶ Opportunity costs

## Satisfied with Oneself



**Figure 6.5.** The sociometer plunge of 2012. Percent of U.S. students (8th, 10th, and 12th grade) who said they were satisfied with themselves. (Source: Monitoring the Future.)

Figure from *The Anxious Generation*,  
Jonathan Haidt



Young people are comparing their real selves with other peoples' curated images and highlight reels.

# LONELINESS

**16-24-year-olds** are the **loneliest** group in society and the more friends you had on Facebook the more likely you were to feel lonely.

All in mind, BBC radio 4 loneliness survey,  
Oct 2018





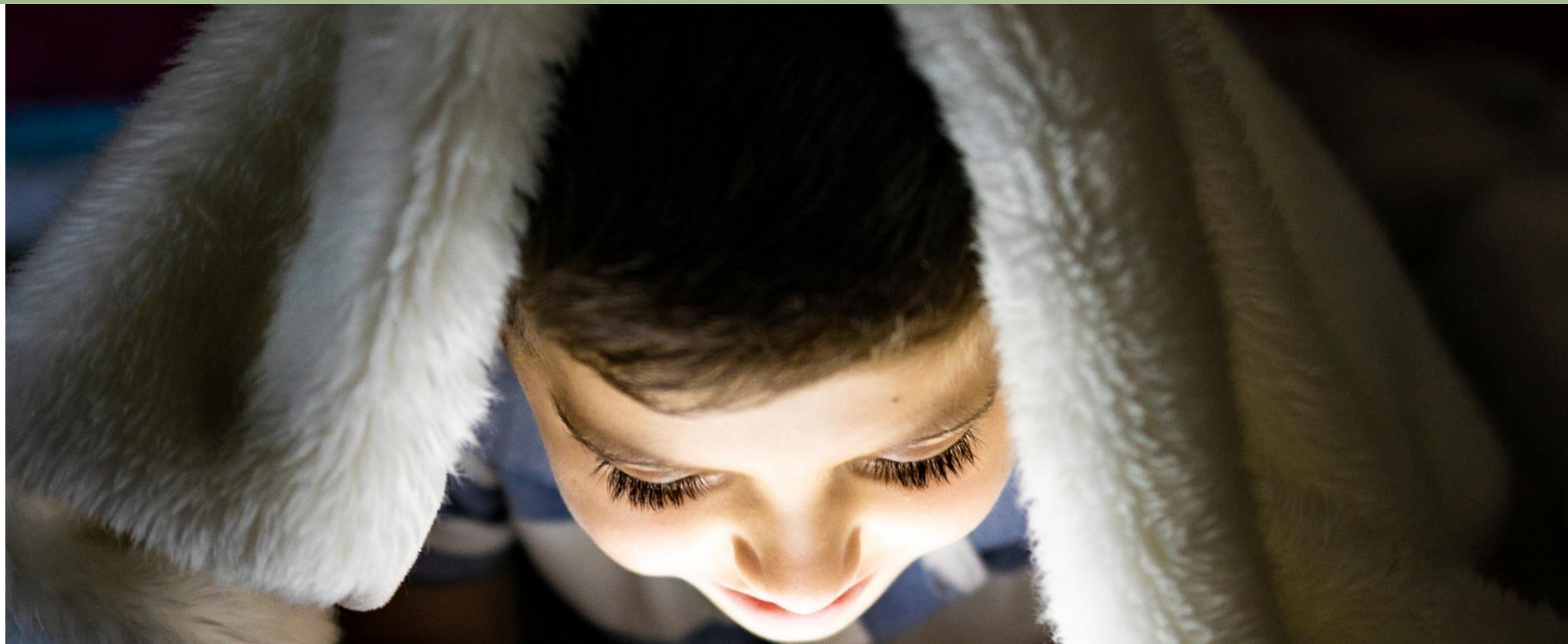
**94%** of children are exposed to  
porn by **14**.

Middlesex University report for NSPCC and the children's  
Commissioner

## WHAT ARE THEY SEEING?

The **average** first  
exposure to porn is **12**.

Rothman, E. F. (2021). Pornography and  
public health. Oxford University Press



# The impact of porn?

“Data on female rape victims disclosed by 31 of the 43 police forces in England and Wales show that 1,458 girls aged 14 reported a rape to the police in 2023-24, more than any other age group.”

Telegraph, 24 September 2024



# WHAT ARE THEY SEEING?

The Children's Commissioner Rachel de Souza spoke to a class of 15-year-olds:

**75% had seen a beheading video**

# THE TIKTOK EXPERIMENT



- ▶ Dummy accounts set up for 13-year-old girls
- ▶ Content about suicide shown within 3 minutes.
- ▶ Content about self-harm shown within 8 minutes.
- ▶ “Vulnerable” profiles received 12 times as much explicit content.



# SLEEP

Pre-teens lose the equivalent of a **night's sleep** per week to social media.

**73%** of teenagers take their phone to bed with them.

A young girl with dark hair and a sad expression is looking down at a tablet computer. She is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. The background is blurred.

**1 in 5 are bullied  
online**

# CYBERBULLYING & MENTAL HEALTH

Of those bullied:

**70%** were adversely affected

**24%** self harm

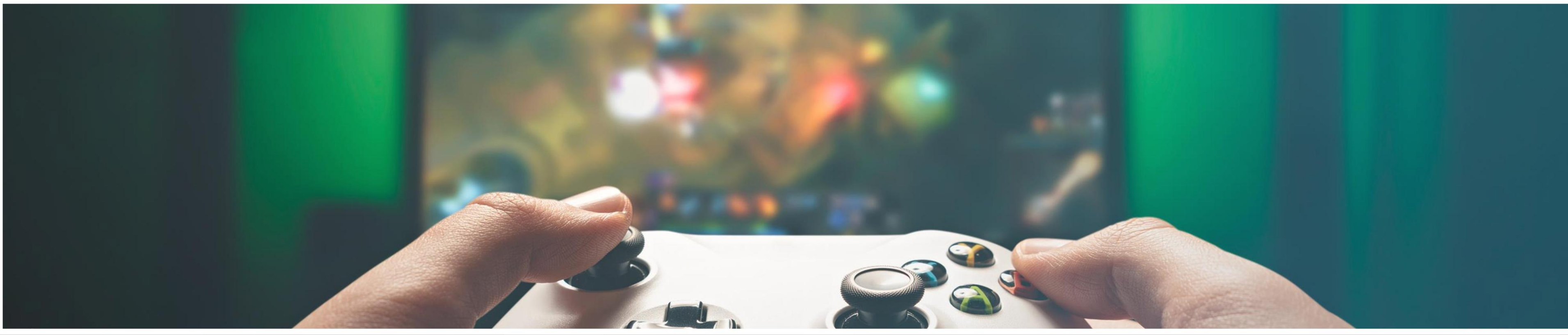
**22%** change their own  
appearance

**13 %** delete the app

Online bullying in England and Wales - Office for  
National Statistics (ons.gov.uk), 2020  
Ditch the label, The Wireless report , 2017

# GAMING

- Risk of multi-player games
- Video games are engineered to maximize dopamine hits, unlike real-world activities that often have slower, less intense rewards.
- Gaming can result in up to **double** the dopamine hit of real-world activities.
- Over time you can develop dopamine tolerance making it harder to enjoy real life.
- Up to 10% of gamers develop a gaming disorder.
- Gaming addiction correlates with dopamine receptor changes similar to those in substance addiction.



# THE OPPORTUNITY COSTS

- ▶ Children spend twice as long looking at screens as playing outside.
- ▶  $\frac{3}{4}$  of UK children spend less time outdoors than prison inmates.



**WE HAVE OVERPROTECTED  
OUR CHILDREN IN THE REAL  
WORLD WHILE  
UNDERPROTECTING THEM  
ONLINE**

Jonathan Haidt



# SOLUTIONS

WHAT CAN WE DO?

# TOP TIPS



▶ If you can, consider delaying the smart phone for as long as possible.

▶ If your child does have a phone, focus on healthy boundaries and staying safe online.

# YOUNGER ADOLESCENTS



*Everyone else  
in my class  
has a  
phone.....*



## **Delay the smart phone**

Or consider a smart phone without the internet or a basic phone.



## **Talk to other parents**

This is your superpower!  
Just because your child says everyone else has x doesn't mean they do.



## **Model good habits**

Parents relationship with their phone and keeping channels of communication open is key.

# What about....?

COMMON PUSHBACK	SOLUTIONS
Buying stuff	Train tickets from machine Child's debit card like Rooster or Go Henry Transport for London Zip Card
Keeping in touch with family and friends	Brick phone / (reinstalled) landline Family tablet used in common areas
I need to track my child	Smart watches have tracking, new 'middle phones' out or coming soon.
Can't I just use parental controls?	Yes, but they can be easily bypassed.
My child has special needs	Technology can be a fantastic tool but bear in mind children with additional needs are at higher risk online.

# VULNERABLE CHILDREN ARE AT HIGHER RISK

## **Education Select Committee report on screen time impacts on education and wellbeing - May 2024**

"Children in care, care leavers, young carers, children experiencing poverty and children with additional needs are more susceptible to online harms. These groups were more susceptible either because of their increased use of screens in comparison to other children, or because of their decreased ability to approach and interact with social media in a self-protective manner."

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/45128/documents/223543/default/>





# PROS AND CONS: ADHD & AUTISM

## Potential benefits

- Assisted communication technologies.
- Facilitate intense interests.
- Enable social connections
- Deepen relationships with family and friends.
- Games can give sense of clarity and control.
- Learn social skills and model positive behaviour.

## Potential disbenefits

- Excessive screen time may exacerbate ADHD symptoms.
- Higher risk for screen-related addiction.
- Neurodivergent kids are at a higher risk for both [in-person and cyberbullying](#).
- Kids who are prone to vulnerability in in-person situations are at greater risk online.
- Increased anxiety from rumination.
- Many ND children mature at a slow rate.
- Model negative behaviour.



*“But it’s not fair if Poppy doesn’t get a smartphone at 10 like her brother Harry did”.*



# TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT DELAYING THE FIRST PHONE

- 1) Listen to your child and validate their feelings.
- 2) It's not never; it's just not yet.
- 3) Just because everyone else has something it doesn't mean it's the best thing for you.



**Basic phones**  
allow your child  
to connect with  
others via text  
and calls.

**New models**  
coming soon.



### **Nokia 105 £19.99** ↗

Sim-free mobile phone

- Talk, text and wireless FM radio
- Amazing battery life
- Torch and snake game



### **Nokia 2660 Flip £50-60** ↗

- Texts and phone calls
- Very long lasting battery
- Range of colours
- Bright, colourful display (non pixelated text)
- Built in FM radio, MP3 player and torch
- Snake (and Tetris but you need to pay for the full game)
- Single rear facing camera (no selfies!)



### **Balance Phone £299** ↗

Released 17 Dec, delivery in time for Christmas

- A smartish phone that is designed to be distraction free, giving modern connectivity without addictive apps or websites
- Provides a fully controlled environment that limits content and is tamper-proof – no requirement for parents to check or update settings
- Contains functional apps such as messaging, banking, music, maps etc
- Has an internet browser which blocks social media, pornography, games, gambling and streaming sites
- No option to monitor or track – aimed at fostering trust and healthy tech habits



### **The Light Phone II £235** ↗

- A premium, minimal phone designed to be used as little as possible
- Black and white 'paper' screen like a kindle, which emits no blue light
- A customisable menu which includes like: an alarm, calculator, calendar, directions
- Music player
- Podcasts
- No internet, social media, email or internet
- Currently only compatible in the UK with Vodafone, Giff Gaff and Three



### **Pinwheel** ↗

£239 for the Samsung Plus 4 model or £479 Google Pixel 8A model. Plus £13.99 monthly for the Pinwheel Caregiver Portal

- Modern, reliable kid phones with built-in parent management
- Device is designed to grow with your child, to meet their experience and maturity level.
- You can create a contact safelist, monitor texts and calls and set schedules for when contacts and apps are available.
- No web browser or social media apps, but hundreds of other vetted apps available, which you can choose to add when your child is ready, including banking, Google Maps, Spotify and Citymapper.
- Inbuilt GPS locator

Xplora®

+

hmd.

The Home of Nokia Phones



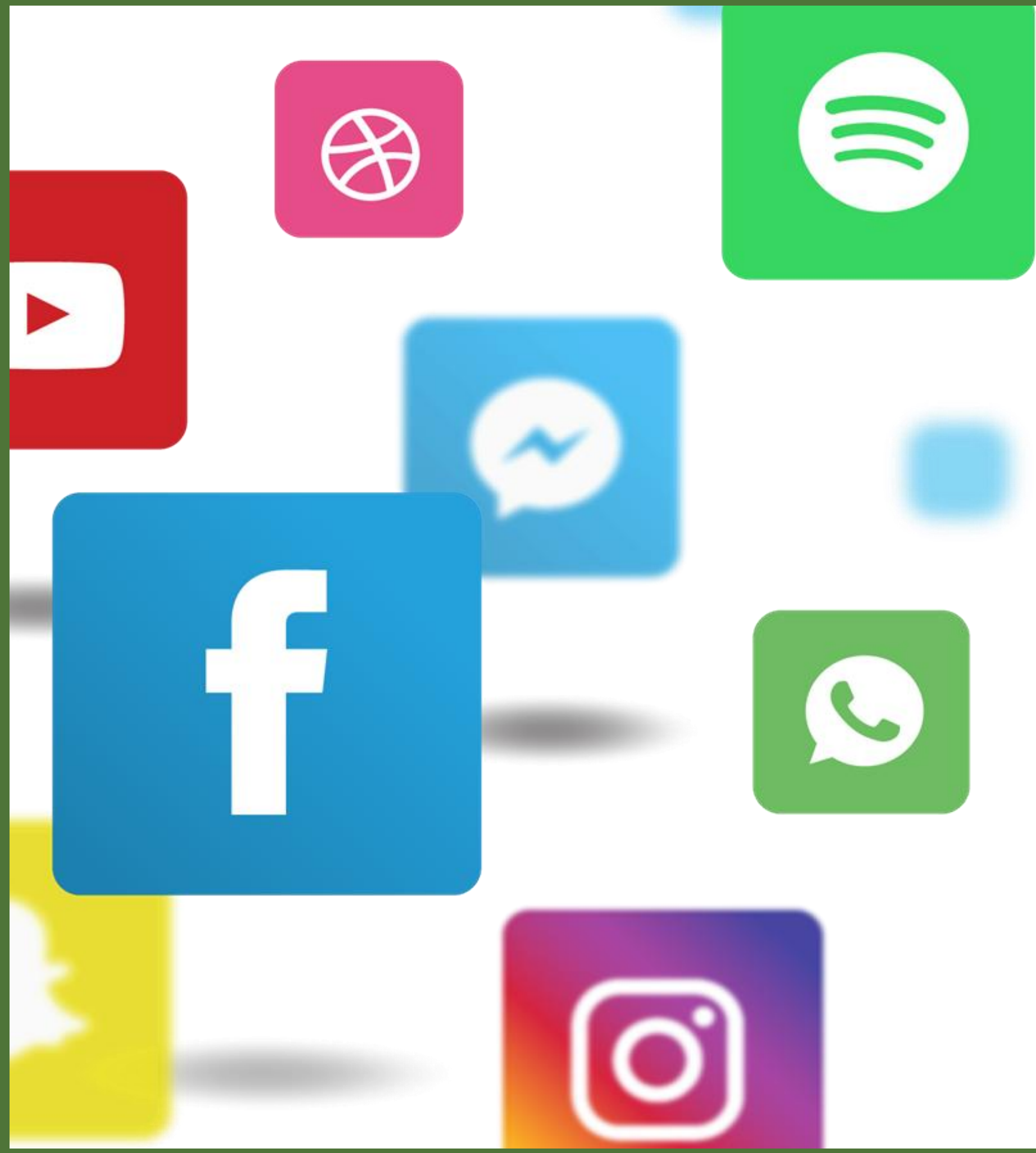
- ▶ Xplora watch: calls, text and location tracker

- ▶ Fusion X1 (hybrid phone)

- ▶ New, stripped back hybrid with map and location tracker

Available later this year - tbc

**MORE OPTIONS!**



# AGE APPROPRIATE APPS

What is the age limit for social media apps?



## **Set screentime limits**

Set up limits on apps and downtime. Encourage do-not-disturb mode or use the Forest app.



## **Reduce distraction**

Try a flip cover, delete or hide apps, turn your phone off when not using or keep it out of sight.



## **Create screen-free spaces**

E.g. no phones at meal-times or in bedrooms at night, no multi-screening.

# TOP TIPS FOR SMART PHONES

# YOUNG PEOPLE KNOW THE COST

**67%**

of 16-18 year olds  
think smartphones  
are harmful

Parentkind poll, 2024

**1 in 5**

of 16-18 year olds  
have felt "life is not  
worth living" due to  
social media

Parentkind poll, 2024

**50%**

of teens say they are  
"addicted" to social  
media

Millennium Cohort Study, 2024

# PARENTS KNOW THE REALITY

**94%**

of primary school  
parents think  
smartphones  
are harmful

Parentkind nationwide poll of 2,496  
people, April 24

**70%**

of parents believe  
smartphones  
negatives impact  
family life

HMD poll of 10,000 parents, June 24

**33%**

of parents of children  
with smartphones have  
cried over their child's  
phone obsession

HMD poll of 10,000 parents, June 24

# PARENT POWER



**The more of you that decide something, whether that's delaying or which apps to allow, the easier it becomes.**

When a minority group pushing change was below 25% of the total group, its efforts failed. **But when the committed minority reached 25%**, there was an abrupt change in the group dynamic, and very quickly the majority of the population adopted the new norm.

# PARENT PACT

Live leaderboards

## National (UK)

**145,216**

Children signed up

**13,883**

Schools covered

## Region

## Pacts

Surrey ↗

8639

Hertfordshire ↗

7492

Scotland ↗

6756

Hampshire ↗

6296

London, South West ↗

5669

London, North ↗

4911

Kent ↗

4819

London, South East ↗

4738

Oxfordshire ↗

4134

East Sussex ↗

4091

West Sussex ↗

4030

Essex ↗

3920

London, East ↗

3917

Wales ↗

3716

# PARENT PACT

Live leaderboards

[← back to National](#)

## Hertfordshire

**7,492**

Children signed up

**422**

Schools covered

## School

## Pacts

<a href="#">Berkhamsted School, Berkhamsted ↗</a>	237
<a href="#">William Ransom Primary School, Hitchin ↗</a>	235
<a href="#">Samuel Lucas JMI School, Hitchin ↗</a>	201
<a href="#">Alban City School, St Albans ↗</a>	156
<a href="#">Bengeo Primary School, Hertford ↗</a>	148
<a href="#">Grove Road Primary School, Tring ↗</a>	144
<a href="#">Cunningham Hill Junior School, St. Albans ↗</a>	127
<a href="#">Bernards Heath Infant School, Bernards Heath ↗</a>	122
<a href="#">Aldwickbury School, Harpenden ↗</a>	113
<a href="#">Crabtree Junior School, Harpenden ↗</a>	111
<a href="#">Highover JMI School, Hitchin ↗</a>	110
<a href="#">Roundwood Primary School, Harpenden ↗</a>	108
<a href="#">Manor Fields Primary School, Bishop's Stortford ↗</a>	105
<a href="#">Cunningham Hill Infant School, St. Albans ↗</a>	101

# PARENT PACT

Live leaderboards

[← back to Hertfordshire](#)

## Christ Church Chorleywood CE School, Chorleywood

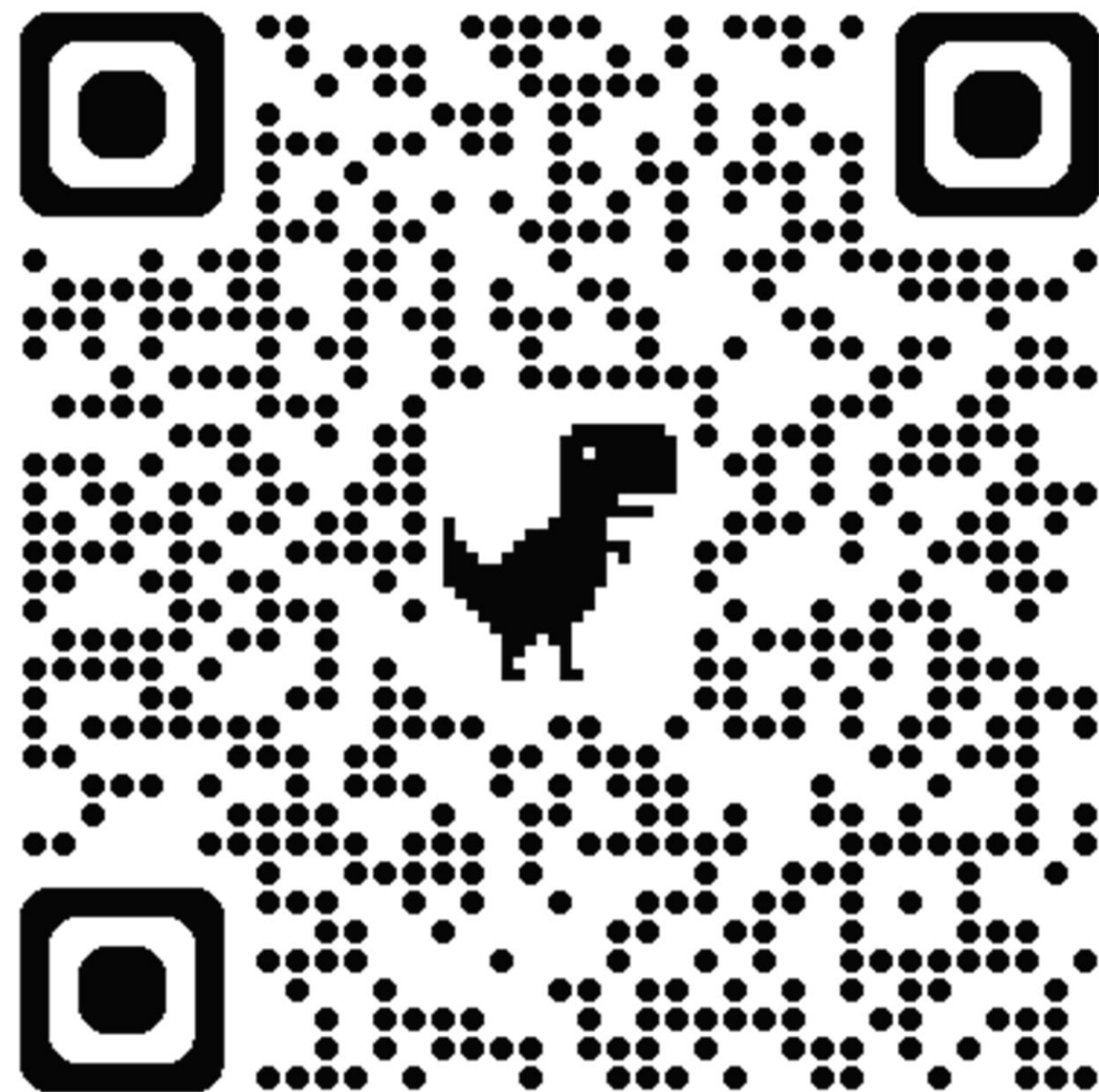
2

Children signed up

Year	Pacts
Year 1	1
Year 2	1

Sign the  
**PARENT PACT**

**SIGN  
THE  
PACT**



<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/parent-pact>

# Schools taking a range of measures



## Primary schools

- No smartphones on school premises.
- No smartphones at drop-off / collection.
- In Y5/6 any basic phones handed in at start of the day.
- Education of children and parents about dangers of smartphones and social media.
- Advise against children having smartphones.
- Importance of play.
- Review of screens overall.

## Secondary schools

- No requirement to use smartphones during school day.
- No smartphones on premises for Y7 (rolling up) / KS3 / all years.
- Keep phones in lockers.
- Lock phones in pouches.
- No smartphones on residential trips or school outings.
- Differential sanctions based on phone type.
- Guidance to parents and students.
- Review of school tech safety and requirements.

# SCHOOLS TAKING A LEAD

## St Albans, Hertfordshire

- 33/36 primary schools came together.
- No smartphones on premises.
- Letter to parents urging delaying smartphones until 14+.
- SFC ambassador in every year.

## Aureus Secondary School, Didcot, Oxfordshire

- Smartphones in Yondr pouches during school day.
- Has led to better social interaction and improved concentration.
- Saw 48% reduction in truancy year on year.

## City of London Academy, London Borough of Southwark

- Southwark secondary heads working group; 18/20 schools signed up.
- Phones to be kept in lockable pouches, with stricter sanctions for smartphones than brick phones.
- From September 2025, Year 7s won't be allowed a smartphone on the premises.
- This will roll up into Year 9 over a three-year period.

## John Wallis Academy, Kent

- Brought in Yondr pouches.
- Detentions and sanctions have decreased by over 40%.
- In school truancy has effectively disappeared.
- Physical altercations nearly eradicated.
- Retention of staff has improved massively.

# EVIDENCE BASE: SMARTPHONES & SCHOOLS

## IMPACT OF SMARTPHONE FREE SCHOOLS

1. Better behaviour.
2. Better attendance.
3. Higher attainment.
4. Higher staff satisfaction / teacher retention.
5. Happier, healthier children.

Children at (robustly) smartphone free schools get GCSE results 1-2 grades higher.

## Research by the Program for Intl Student Assessment, OECD

Found students who spend less than 1 hour of “leisure” time on digital devices a day scored about 50 points higher in maths than students who spent more than 5 hours a day. This gap held even after adjusting for socioeconomic factors.

Disconnect

Policy Exchange

The Case for a Smartphone Ban in Schools  
Iain Mansfield, Dr Sean Phillips and Niamh Webb  
Foreword by Professor Jonathan Haidt



<https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/disconnect/>

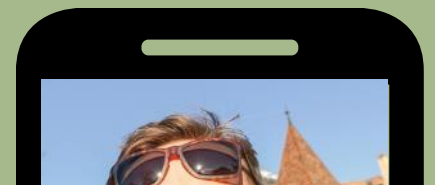
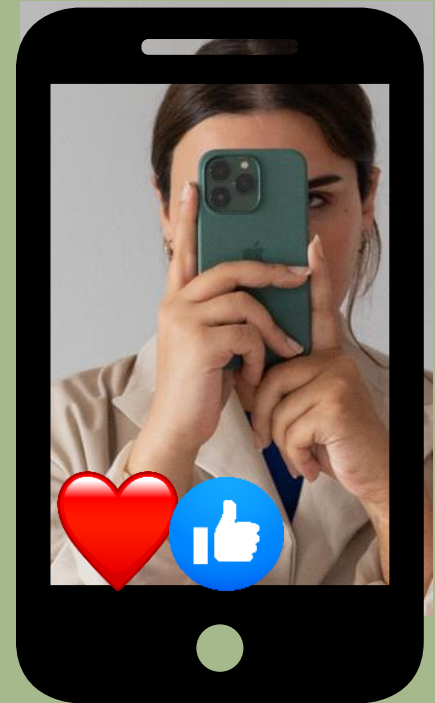
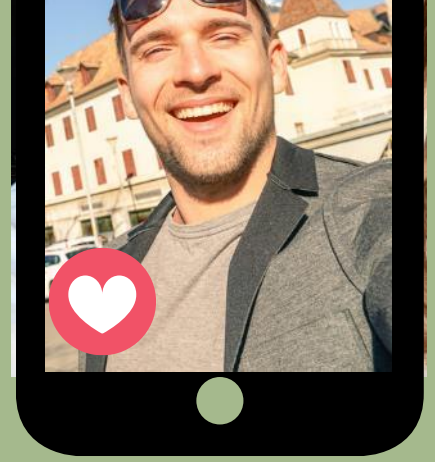
# PRE-SMARTPHONE CALL TO ACTION



1. Mum and Dad, talk to each other.
2. Talk to your child.
3. Talk to other parents. Spread the word.
4. Join SFC /sign the Parent Pact, if you wish (no pressure!)

# POST-SMARTPHONE CALL TO ACTION

1. You **do not need permission** to change your mind.
2. Discuss tech as a family.
3. Have clear **time** and **place** boundaries.

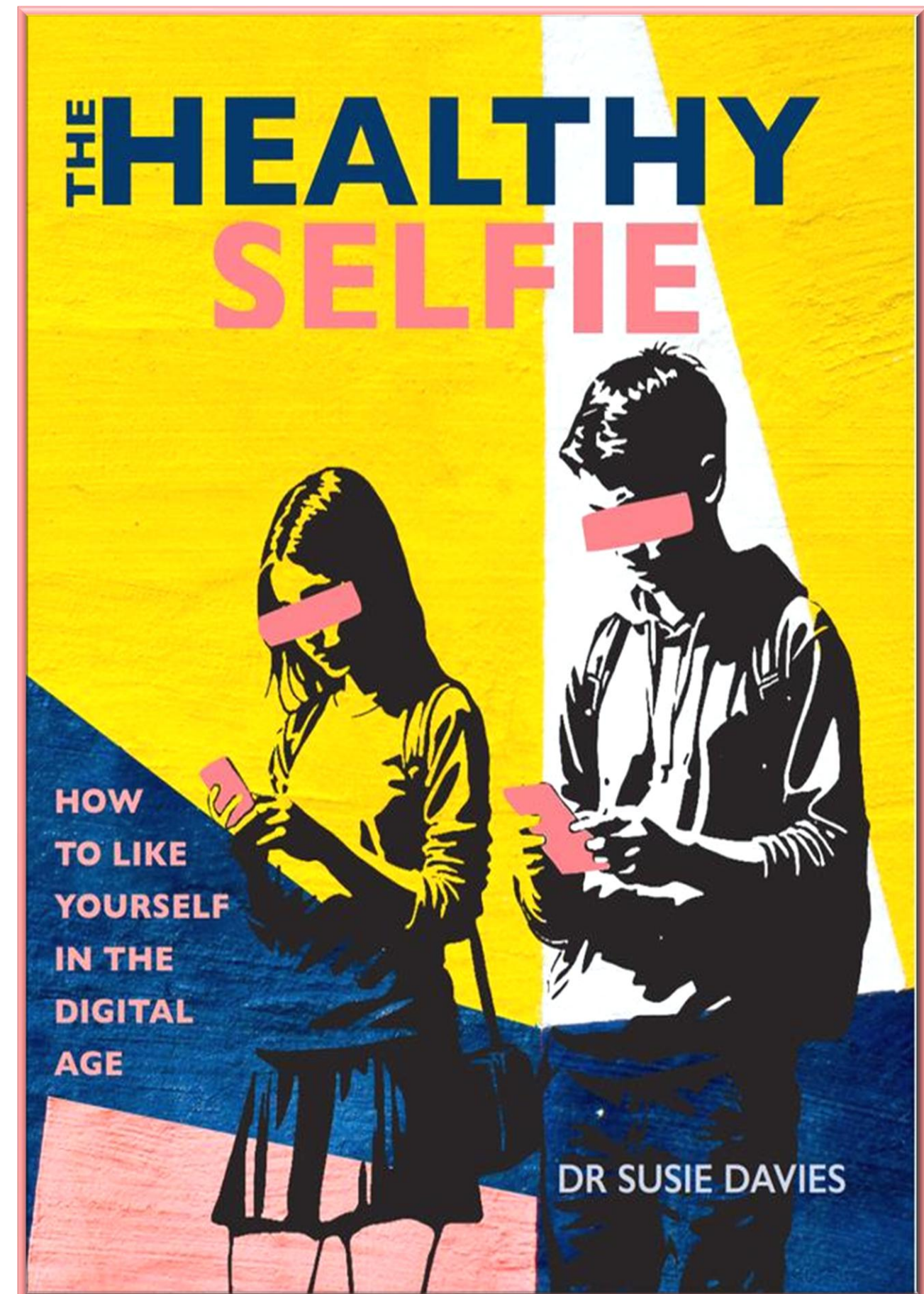


**New book for 13 – 18-year-olds  
Dr Susie Davies**

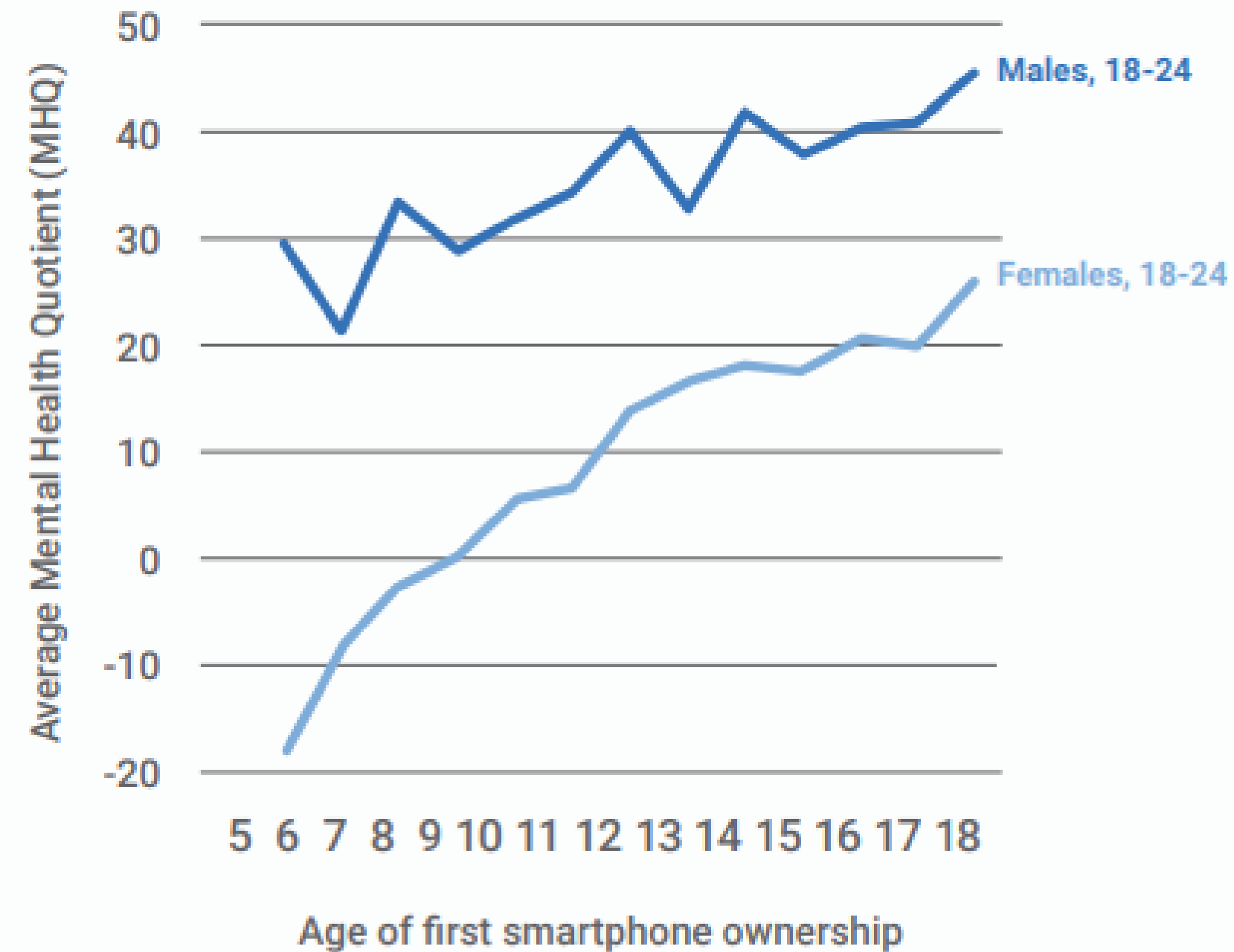
**AVAILABLE NOW!**

<https://thehealthyselfie.co.uk>

OR ON AMAZON



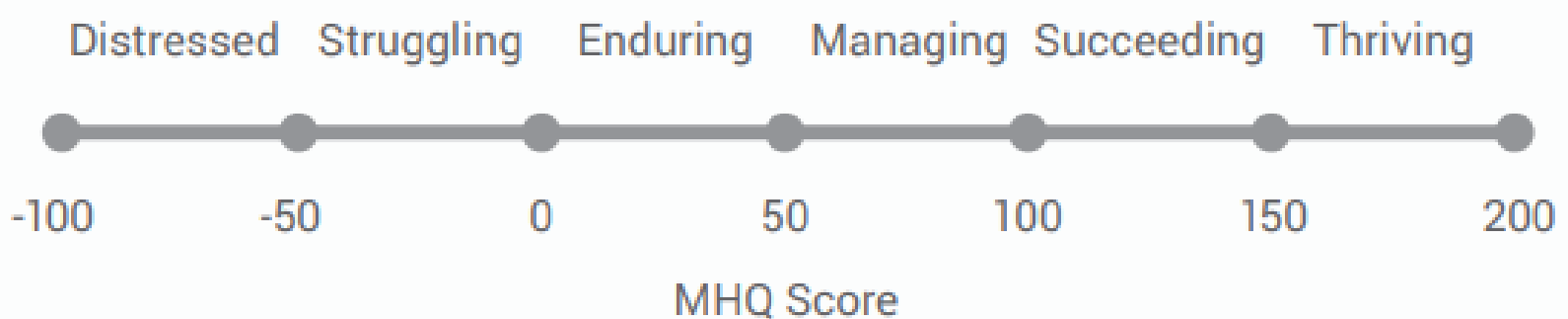
## MHQ



# MENTAL HEALTH

**Mental wellbeing improved with older age of smartphone ownership.**

The younger the age of first smartphone ownership the lower the mental health outcomes.



Age of First Smartphone/Tablet and Mental Wellbeing Outcomes. Sapien Labs, May 15, 2023



“

You can't go back and change the beginning,  
but you can start where you are and change  
the ending.

C.S. Lewis

Any  
questions?

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