Acceptable Use of Screens Policy (Website Version)

<div style="border:1px solid red">

Quick Links (Links to Internal Forms Not Available on Website Version)
Phone Notification Form for Parents of Seniors (See Personal Electronic Devices, starting on p.5)
Screen Use Agreement with Parents (See Role of Parents, starting on p.8)

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Introduction
A distinctive culture
At Heritage School we are seeking to create a distinctive culture with respect to screens – one which intentionally limits screen use in order to prioritise deeper knowledge, face-to-face relationships, and real-world activities. This introduction explains why, and clarifies the scope and purposes of this policy.

A central objective of this policy is to establish an effective partnership between home and school. Given the fundamental threats posed by excessive screen use, a common approach is essential if the school is to achieve its aims for its pupils. The school can regulate screen time and screen content during school hours. If parents want their child(ren) to flourish, they must regulate screen time and screen content outside of school hours. For this reason, we expect all parents to read this policy annually and sign the Screen Use Agreement with Parents annually in September.

Toward fullness of life
Our goal is the healthiest possible development of children and young people in every area – intellectually, physically, morally, spiritually, emotionally, and socially – so that they can direct their own lives wisely toward that which is best. We can help them get started, and our hope is that they will keep moving toward an ever fuller and richer life.

Healthy development depends upon fundamentals being in place such as physical safety and well-being, warm, secure relationships both inside and outside the home, and a plausible framework of meaning and value to help make sense of the world. Acquiring foundational intellectual skills such as reading, writing, and maths is also essential for further growth.

Building on these foundations, the conviction shaping the work of Heritage School is that *we move toward fullness only as we engage for ourselves and develop meaningful real-world relations*. This is what our curriculum is designed to encourage. When we say 'relations' we mean knowledge in a thick sense, the type of knowledge that only arises from a giving of the self through attentive engagement. This can be contrasted with a thin view of knowledge as mere information to help us perform a task. We emphasise 'real-world' because we are, after all, *embodied* beings.

Knowledge-as-relation, then, implies a genuine 'getting in touch' of the total self with God, with others, and with nature. As we give our attention and open ourselves patiently, even reverently, to what each has to offer, these relations feed us. Our lives become more interconnected and more richly textured. We grow in understanding and empathy. We experience an increase in wonder and joy. Creative pathways open up to us. We begin to see the whole, and the right relationship between the parts. In short, we become larger people and we have more to give to others.

This vision of human flourishing and the convictions shaping the work of Heritage School are anchored in Christian tradition and are explained more fully on the Our Vision, Our Priorities, and Our Ethos pages of our website.

The place of technology

Human creativity has always included devising tools and techniques to make life better. This is part of what it means to be human and is to be celebrated. We are the beneficiaries of thousands of years of innovation. Over recent decades, developments in computers and communications technology have changed our lives significantly, and they have brought countless benefits.

Giving pupils the underlying and specific skills to engage creatively with technology is an important goal of our curriculum. Toward that end, we deliver Computer Science lessons in Years 6-8 and we offer a Computer Science IGCSE. Through Computer Science, Maths, Biology, Chemistry and Physics the necessary foundations are laid for pupils to study STEM subjects at A Level and beyond. Many of our former pupils have gone on to do so.

If technology in general has an important role to play in human flourishing, it is also true that not every technology, or every use of technology, is good for us, for our communities, or for the environment. When set within a framework such as the Christian tradition, it becomes obvious that there should be certain boundaries, or limits, to our use of technology: other factors come into play. It can, of course, be challenging to determine where the boundaries should be drawn in relation to each technology.

The focus of this policy: overuse and misuse

This policy is not addressing technology in general. Nor is it addressing screen use in general. Rather, this policy is concerned solely with particular types of screen overuse and misuse. When using the term 'screens' it is primarily focussing upon the overuse and misuse of:

- the internet (including chat rooms, message boards, blogs, etc.),
- watching video content (including YouTube, Netflix, television, etc.),
- social media (including apps such as Snapchat, Instagram, and WhatsApp), and
- gaming.

Hardware such as smartphones, smartwatches, laptops, tablets, televisions and other personal electronic devices also fall within the scope of this policy.

Overuse: the problem of excessive screen time

In relation to the internet, watching video content, using social media and gaming, establishing time boundaries is essential. Statistics tell us that screen use has come to dominate our waking hours.[1] The market saturation of the smartphone from about 2012 has had a particularly profound social impact, creating a new cultural norm of incessant digital connection (what we might call 'smartphone culture'). From a historical perspective, the way that screens have become so deeply embedded into our lives in such a short space of time is a social revolution of the highest order, and it should raise far reaching questions.

In the light of our conviction that *we move toward fullness only as we engage for ourselves and develop meaningful real-world relations*, the overwhelming dominance of screens in our free time poses a serious threat to human flourishing for at least four fundamental reasons:

1. *Shallow knowledge*. Screen-based forms of communication and entertainment are different in nature to real-world relationships and activities. The medium and characteristics of the screen itself narrows the experience. In many important respects screens get in the way and disconnect us. They offer at best a thin form of knowledge, a partial relation.

2. *Lost opportunities*. Screen overuse is displacing wholesome real-world, embodied, knowledge-building growth opportunities, such as playing with friends, sport, music, art, playing with toys, cooking, being outdoors, gardening, etc. Jonathan Haidt identifies the loss of face-to-face socialising due to screen time as one of the 'foundational harms' caused by smartphones and urges a return to a play-based childhood.[2]

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[1] The average adult spends 8 hrs and 45 mins per day using media and communications services, more than time spent sleeping, according to *The Communications Market Report* 2016 (Ofcom). See the *Media Nations: UK 2023* report and the *Online Nation 2023* report for more up-to-date statistics.

[2] See The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness, by Jonathan Haidt (2024)

3. *Undermining attention, initiative, and creativity*. Social media and other apps, video games, and streaming platforms are designed with a sophisticated awareness of weaknesses in human psychology to capture and hold our attention. The reason is clear: so that tech companies can maximise profit through subscriptions or advertising.[3] The incessant demands and addictive power of the digital are making us more distracted, unable to disconnect and sustain attention for longer periods of time. They are also making us more passive and more easily led, with weaker powers of self-direction (will power). Screen activities can dominate our imaginative life. We can become impatient with silence, slowness, boredom, and effort – which are necessary conditions for insight, creativity and deeper knowledge.

4. *Rise in anxiety and depression*. Linked to these factors, excessive smartphone use from about 2012 is correlated to a sharp rise across the developed world in rates of teenage anxiety, depression, suicide and self-harm. Among the contributing factors are incessant digital stimulation, constant exposure to one's peer group through social media, destructive online content and behaviour, and loss of sleep.[4]

Misuse: the problem of destructive online content
Robust content filters are necessary at home and school due to the existence in the online world of *destructive screen content.* Failure by schools or parents to install content filters on all devices children have access to, including smartphones, is a serious safeguarding concern because it exposes them to significant harm.

The evidence is clear that, according to the Children's Commissioner, 'Children are frequently exposed to a wide range of inappropriate and harmful content online, included sexualised and violent imagery, anonymous trolling, and material promoting suicide, self-harm and eating disorders.'[5] Of particular concern is online pornography and the prevalence of sexual imagery depicting coercion, humiliation and physical aggression.[6] Due to incessant access to the internet through smartphones, the consumption of online pornography is having a devastating impact upon individuals, relationships, and society as a whole.[7]

The online world could be likened to a megacity. It contains much that is valuable and stimulating.

However, a megacity will also contain dark places and dangerous people. No responsible adult would consider sending a child into a megacity alone. Parents and schools must ensure, through robust content filters, that children and young people cannot access destructive content.
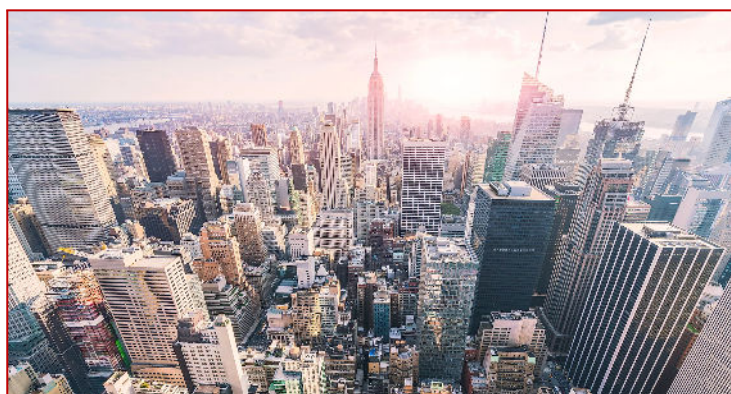
See the Appendix to this policy for more information about online risks, including forms of exploitation and cyber-bullying.

Purposes
The purposes of this policy are to:
- Explain the convictions which guide the approach of the school to screen use (see above),
- Explain what the school does to promote the acceptable use of screens,

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[3] See, for example, the book *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention – and How to Think Deeply Again* by Johan Hari (2022); The Techwise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in its Proper Place by Andy Crouch (2017); the Netflix documentary 'The Social Dilemma' (2020).
[4] To learn more, see Jonathan Haidt's book, referred to above, or his webinar with Smartphone Free Childhood (March 2024).
[5] See Digital childhoods: a survey of children and parents (September 2022), p.4.
[6] See Evidence on pornography's influence on harmful sexual behaviour among children (May 2023).
[7] See, for example, https://fightthenewdrug.org/get-the-facts/ to learn more.

- Explain our expectations for pupils with respect to screen use,
- Explain the school's policy regarding phones and other personal electronic devices,
- Encourage partnership between home and school with respect to acceptable screen use,
- Encourage pupils and families to participate in our 'digital detox' opportunities,
- Outline (in the Appendix) specific risks associated with screen use and identify resources to help parents.

Role of the School

The school plays an important role in the acceptable use of screens by establishing and promoting a culture that is oriented toward deeper knowledge, face-to-face relationships, and real-world activities. We recognise that habits established in childhood and teen years are particularly important as they can shape patterns for life.

The school promotes the acceptable use of screens through its own limited use of screens during routine teaching, through PSHE lessons which raise awareness of online risks and promote effective self-management of screen use, through the Screen Use Agreement with Pupils, through its policy regarding personal devices, through the partnership that the school seeks to establish with parents, including the Screen Use Agreement with Parents, and through encouraging parents and pupils to participate in digital detox opportunities.

Screens in the curriculum

As explained in the introduction, the school encourages pupils to engage for themselves and develop meaningful real-world relations. Our approach to routine classroom learning is, therefore, intentionally low-tech. We do not supply pupils with ipads or tablets and we do not make use of interactive whiteboards. Because of our emphasis upon proactive pupil engagement we place a high priority upon 'the habit of attention', i.e. cultivating high levels of focus for appropriate lengths of time. We make use of various methods and strategies to achieve this.[8]

The school actively encourages pupils to creatively engage with technology, particularly through its Computer Science curriculum, which commences in Year 6, and through the Computer Science IGCSE. Pupils are encouraged to be skillful users of online resources and systems. Independent research projects and other homework assignments provide opportunities to train pupils in how to conduct online research and find reliable sources of information. From Year 7, the school makes use of Google Classroom. All Senior pupils are given password protected Heritage School Google email accounts. Pupils receive guidance on how to access their school email and make use of Google Classroom.

PSHE

Through its PSHE curriculum the school teaches pupils about and helps them to balance the benefits of screen use with the general and specific risks associated with it. Pupils are educated in an age appropriate manner about the importance of safe and responsible use of screens, including the school's expectations for online behaviour by its pupils (see Expectations of Pupils below). The main areas of risk covered in our PSHE curriculum are identified in the Appendix to this policy.

Content filtering and monitoring

The school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to protect pupils from accessing or creating inappropriate or harmful content while working on school owned and managed devices connected to the school's network. We monitor pupil's use of internet services and electronic devices (e.g. Chromebooks) in keeping with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. The monitoring we do is carried out using software tools provided by Smoothwall which automatically notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads if there is a concern. For more information about the school's approach to filtering and monitoring see our Safeguarding Policy.

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[8] See https://heritageschool.org.uk/about-heritage/school-priorities/ for more information.

Personal Electronic Devices
General rule: no personal electronic devices for pupils
Pupils are not permitted to bring personal electronic devices to the school or on school trips, apart from specific exceptions identified below. This general prohibition applies, but is not limited, to basic phones, smartphones, laptop computers, tablet computers, smartwatches, fitness trackers with functionality akin to smartwatches, Kindles, cameras and ipods. See our Uniform Policy for more information about wearable technology.

Specific exceptions may be agreed to this general prohibition where there are learning needs that necessitate the use of, for example, a laptop. Specific permission may be given for stand alone cameras on residential trips.

Exception: phones for Seniors on days they travel independently
Our preference is that Senior pupils do not bring phones to school. However, we recognise that if a Senior pupil travels independently to/from school, parents may prefer their child to have a phone for safety reasons. Please note that phones are never permitted on school trips.

However, because we want a culture at Heritage that prioritises face-to-face relating and that resists 'smartphone culture' – where smartphones readily intrude into or become the centre-point of a social situation, the following limitations and recommendations are currently in place:
- **Year 7 Pupils:** From September 2024, Year 7 pupils are not permitted to bring a smartphone to school; Year 7 pupils who travel independently, and for whom parents believe a phone is necessary for safety reasons, are only permitted to bring a basic phone (not internet enabled), which offer the safety of connectivity without the potential downsides of a smartphone.
- **Pupils in Years 8-11:** During 2024-25 the above restriction only applies to Year 7; we are currently reviewing our policy for older year Senior pupils from September 2025. **However, for all pupils in the Senior School, we urge parents to consider sending their child to school with a basic phone instead of a smartphone**

Please note that where pupils bring phones to school or a school activity, they must not be taken out of bags prior to registration time or after 4pm. Pupils attending after-school activities, who have already collected their phones at the end of the day, must leave their phones in their bags for the duration of the activity.

Phones Procedure (Seniors Only)
The following Phones Procedure must be adhered to for phones brought to school:
- Prior parental notification is required before a pupil brings a phone to school (see below).
- If a pupil brings a phone to school:
  - It *must* be a basic phone (not internet enabled) for Year 7.
  - Our strong preference is that pupils in Year 8 and above only bring basic phones
- Phones must be placed in a container during registration time.
- They should have a label on it with the child's name.
- The phone container will be taken to the School Office after registration time.
- It will be stored during the day in the School Office.
- The phone containers will be placed in the main entrance hall at 4pm, at the formal end of the school day.
- Pupils will collect their phones from the relevant container.
- A phone must not be taken out of bags prior to registration or after 4pm without prior permission from a teacher for a legitimate purpose (e.g. contacting parents about collection arrangements).

Please note that this procedure applies to Seniors only. If parents of pupils in Year 5 or Year 6 agree with the school for their child to travel independently, arrangements for bringing and storing a basic phone during the day will be made on a case by case basis.

ACTION: Phone Notification Form for Parents of Seniors

If a Senior pupil is to bring a phone to school we require parents to inform the school in advance that their child will be doing so using this Phone Notification Form for Parents. Please click on the link to access the form.

Phone Notification Form for Parents of Seniors

In order for a pupil to bring a phone to school, a parent must agree to the following:

- ☐ I confirm that I have read the Acceptable Use of Screens Policy.
- ☐ I believe it is **necessary** for my child to bring a phone to school on days when he/she travels to/from school independently for safety reasons.
- ☐ My child will bring the following type of phone to school:
  (1) Basic phone (not internet enabled)
  (2) Smartphone (only possible for Y8-Y11)
- ☐ My child travels independently to school and, therefore, needs a phone:
  (1) Every day of the week
  (2) On certain days of the week
  (3) Occasionally, when he/she travels independently
- ☐ I release the school from liability for any loss or damage to my child's phone that may result from the storage of phones in keeping with the Acceptable Use of Screens Policy.
- ☐ I have discussed the Phones Procedure in the Acceptable Use of Screens Policy with my child. He/she agrees to hand in his/her phone at registration time and not take it out of his/her bag on site before registration time or during an afterschool activity.

After you submit the form you will see an automatic confirmation message. It is then acceptable for your child to bring a phone to school in keeping with the Phones Procedure above.

Enforcement – two week confiscation

We expect pupils to act in good faith and in keeping with this policy by handing in their phone each day, and we expect parents to help enforce adherence to this policy by ensuring that no personal electronic devices are brought to school apart from the exceptions noted above.

Any phones or other electronic devices that are discovered, including phones brought to school where the Phone Notification Form for Parents of Seniors has not been completed, or phones taken out of bags during after school activities without prior permission from a teacher, will be confiscated for two weeks and parents will be notified.

We reserve the right periodically to perform searches in keeping with the school's protocols. Further infringements of this policy will lead to an escalation of sanctions in accordance with our Behaviour Policy.

Expectations of Pupils

Pupil responsibility for their online behaviour

What pupils do and the way in which they relate to one another online can have a significant impact upon their well-being and that of others. As noted above, through our PSHE curriculum pupils are taught about general and specific risks associated with screen use and about appropriate online behaviour. We expect pupils, at all times, to assume responsibility for themselves and their behaviour, including their online behaviour.

Screen Use Agreement with Senior Pupils

Our expectation for how pupils should behave online is encouraged through our Screen Use Agreement with Pupils. It is for Senior School pupils only and is presented to them annually in September. They are asked to read it and tick all statements with which they agree, and then sign a hard copy.

Screen Use Agreement with Senior Pupils

Senior pupils are asked to complete this agreement year. They are asked to tick all statements with which they agree, and then sign a hard copy.

Integrity

- ☐ I recognise that people tend to be less restrained in what they say or do online than they are in person.
- ☐ I will do my best to avoid saying anything online, either to or about others, that I would not be prepared to say to that person face-to-face.
- ☐ In keeping with the School's policy, I will not bring a phone to school unless my parents have completed the Phone Notification Form, I will hand my phone in at registration time, and I will never bring a phone on a school trip.

Inclusion

- ☐ I will do all that I can, both in-person and online, to make Heritage School an inclusive and friendly community (e.g. by including others when starting a social media group).
- ☐ I understand that not all pupils will want or be allowed to participate in the screen-based activities that I participate in (such as gaming or using social media). I understand that talking too much about such activities can make those who do not participate feel excluded.

Balance

- ☐ I will do my best to limit my screen use and prioritise real world relationships and activities.
- ☐ I understand that too much screen time can negatively affect sleep and physical activity/fitness, and that it can displace in-person socialising with friends and other wholesome activities.
- ☐ I understand that too much screen time can negatively affect my ability to focus (i.e. my attention) and the quality of my school work.

Safety

Harmful content

- ☐ I acknowledge that there is harmful content online that children and young people should not have access to.
- ☐ I will not search for, download, upload or forward to others material that is harmful to me or to others.
- ☐ I will not generate content that is harmful to others.

Harmful people

- ☐ I understand that there are harmful people who are active online and who try to take advantage of others (e.g. financially or sexually).
- ☐ I understand what 'grooming' is. (It is appearing to befriend someone in order to persuade or entice that person to act in a way they would otherwise not want to.)
- ☐ I will never arrange to meet someone in person that I have only ever met online without the agreement of my parents.
- ☐ I understand that there are risks with giving my personal information online (e.g. contact details or bank account information).

Filtering and Monitoring

- ☐ I understand that the school's filtering software will block access on school computers to certain websites that may be unsafe.
- ☐ I understand that the school's monitoring software is able to track all of my activity on school computers and that it will alert the school if any of my activity raises safeguarding concerns.

Misbehaviour online

If a pupil is aware of inappropriate online behaviour by other Heritage pupils they should talk to their parents about it immediately. Parents may be able to clarify or resolve the matter, including by talking with other parents. Where this is not possible parents and pupils should inform the school immediately. Misbehaviour between Heritage pupils online is a legitimate concern of the school and will be dealt with in keeping with our Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and our Safeguarding Policy.

Role of Parents

Home and school partnership

A central objective of this policy is to encourage effective partnership between home and school. Parental engagement is essential because screen use takes place almost entirely outside of school. Where families embrace the convictions and recommendations of this policy, it also makes it easier for other families to adhere to it which, in turn, strengthens the culture for the benefit of all.

Establish parental authority at an early age

It is essential that parents establish their authority over the use of screens at an early age. Exercising parental responsibility over screen time and screen content is a normal part of family life and should be presented as a matter of fact.

Where this principle is established when children are young, it reduces conflict over screens later. As children get older, the reasons for regulating screen time and screen content should be discussed openly, so that they can weigh up for themselves the risks and benefits and, hopefully, internalise core values. For older children, it is appropriate to set screen time limits in discussion with them, while retaining your parental right to make the final decision.

Open communication

The Appendix to this policy contains information about specific risks associated with screen use and links to helpful websites for additional information. It is essential that parents are familiar with the risks and, even more importantly, cultivate habits of open communication about screen use with their child(ren).

Parent control software

As noted above, it is imperative that parents safeguard their child(ren) from harm by installing effective content filters covering all devices that their child has access to. This is especially true for smartphones, and it remains true beyond age 16, particularly with respect to pornography.

Parent control software is also the best way to regulate screen time on smartphones, particularly on social media apps or youtube. It enables parents to decide which applications can be accessed and how much time is appropriate on each. Parents can set overall time limits and deactivate a phone at night to protect healthy sleep patterns. Here are some examples of parent control software: Qustodio; Family Link; NetNanny; Family Time.

Smartphone Free Childhood – until at least age 14-16

As noted above, the evidence is mounting that there are serious risks to healthy childhood development associated with screen use, and that these risks have been dramatically intensified by the incessant internet access made possible because of smartphones.

Given the risks associated with screen use, our recommendation is that children not have a smartphone until at least age 14-16. As noted above, where parents adopt a common approach it makes it easier for other families.

Toward that end, we encourage all parents to support the Smartphone Free Childhood movement and learn more about the threat from these devices. You can sign up on their website and receive periodic updates. Collective local action is needed to resist the intense social pressure to conform, given that 97% of children in the UK own a smartphone by age 12. A Smartphone Free Childhood parents' WhatsApp group has been created for Heritage families to share concerns and work together. To join the Heritage Cambridge Smartphone Free Childhood Group, click on this invitation link.

We recognise that many Heritage parents, as per the wider social norm, have already given a smartphone to their child. Where this is the case, we strongly urge all parents to make use of parent control software to regulate screen time and screen content. We recognise that many proactive parents, with the support of such tools, have helped their teenage children manage smartphones effectively.

ACTION: Screen Use Agreement with Parents
In order to protect their child from risks associated with screen overuse and misuse, and in order to ensure the maximum possible benefit from all the Heritage has to offer, we expect all families to sign up to at least the Core Commitment of our Screen Use Agreement with Parents and to renew this commitment each year in September. Please click on the link to complete the form.

Screen Use Agreement with Parents
To be renewed annually in September.

Core Commitment
Acceptable Use of Screens Policy
☐ We confirm that we have read the Acceptable Use of Screens Policy, including the Appendix: Online Risks & Useful Links.

Limits Upon Screen Time
☐ During our child(ren)'s free time, we will establish and consistently enforce agreed limits on screen time, including on smartphones (if they are given one).

Limits Upon Screen Content
☐ We will ensure there are content filters/controls on all devices our child(ren) has(have) access to, including smartphones (if they are given one), to ensure that harmful content such as pornography cannot be accessed.

Recommended Commitments (Optional)
Age for a Smartphone
☐ We commit to not giving our child(ren) a smartphone until at least age 14-16.

Protecting Healthy Sleep
☐ We will not permit screens (e.g. a television or computer) to be installed in our child(ren)'s bedroom(s).
☐ We will not permit portable screens (including laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) to be in our child(ren)'s bedroom(s) overnight.
☐ We will establish a central charging station, not in a bedroom, where smartphones will be kept at night for all family members.

Screen Free Week Participation
☐ We agree to participate as a family in the Heritage School annual Screen Free Week as an opportunity to prioritise real world relationships and activities and re-evaluate screen habits. (This takes place in June of each year. It applies to the use of screens for leisure purposes and does not preclude use of screens for work or essential communications.)

Digital Detox Opportunities
Annual Screen Free Week
Families are strongly encouraged to opt into Screen Free Week. Our annual Screen Free Week takes place in June, when the weather is good and the days are long. It lasts seven days, starting at 8am on a Monday morning. It is intended to create additional time for real world relationships and activities and an opportunity to re-imagine how screen use might be ordered differently.

Those who participate commit to not making use of screens for leisure purposes. Screen free week is not intended to compromise work or essential communications, although you may wish to take the opportunity to behave differently in these areas.

It involves saying 'no' to TV, the internet, movies, YouTube, video games, social media (except for essential practical communications), your favourite apps, online shopping, online news, etc. and saying 'yes' to time with family and friends, books, toys, sport, painting, music, climbing trees, walks, bikes, writing a story, cooking, baking, board games, museums, and so on!

Authorised by	J Fletcher, Headmaster
Date	August 2024

Review date	August 2025
Circulation	Staff and parents via website

Appendix: Online Risks & Useful Links

The purpose of this Appendix is to summarise risks associated with screen-based activity, and to provide links to useful websites that parents may find helpful.

It is vital that parents:
- take an interest in online activity and be aware of what your child is doing online,
- talk to children about online risks and how to manage them,
- be aware of trends in online activity generally.

The risks identified below are discussed with pupils through our PSHE programme.

The 4 Cs
One helpful way to summarise risks from screen-based activity is the 4 Cs:

Content
Being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content (e.g. pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antiSemitism, radicalisation and extremism);

Contact
Being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users (e.g. peer pressure, commercial advertising, and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom and/or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes);

Conduct
A pupil's personal online behaviour that can increase the likelihood of, or cause, harm (e.g. making, sending and receiving explicit images such as consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images, and online bullying;

Commerce
Risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Displacement of more wholesome activities
One of the most significant risks with screen use – given the exceptional amount of time the average person spends on screens – is the time not spent doing something more life enhancing and constructive. Time is finite, and sleep, exercise and in-person socialising are among those activities commonly displaced by screen use. What is not done can have a significant impact upon well-being.

Impact on attention
Excessive screen use habituates us to a certain type and rate of stimulation. Forms of screen use are recognised to be psychologically addictive. Excessive screen use can make it hard for us to cope with slower and more cognitively demanding tasks that require sustained focus (like reading or other academic tasks). This can have a negative impact upon academic performance.

Habituation to high levels of screen-based stimulation can have wider life implications. Those who are screen-stimulation dependent can enter a state where they are more reactive than proactive. This can compromise the reflective time necessary to make wise choices and achieve longer-term goals.

Cyberbullying
Once children begin using social media, they are at risk of online bullying (cyberbullying). The 'disinhibition effect' means that people tend to be less restrained in what they say or do online than they are in person. In addition, online bullying can readily intrude into spaces that were previously thought of as safe, due to the ease of access to messaging services. The emotional distress caused by online bullying can be severe.

Social media age limits

Parents should be aware of and enforce the age limits for setting up one's own social media account. Here are some examples:

- Facebook: 13 years old
- Instagram: 13 years old
- Tiktok: 13 years old
- Snapchat: 13 years old
- WhatsApp: 16 years old

Responding to cyberbullying

How pupils should respond to online bullying:

- Don't respond
- Don't retaliate
- Talk to a trusted adult
- Save the evidence
- Block the bully
- Don't be a bully
- Be a friend not a bystander

How parents should respond to online bullying

- Listen and take the child seriously
- Make sure the child is safe and feels safe
- Don't overreact
- Encourage the child not to retaliate
- Gather and save the evidence
- Encourage the child to solve the problem
- Teach self-esteem and resilience
- Encourage the child to reach out to friends
- Talk to the school if other children involved also attend the school

See our Anti Bullying Policy for more information.

Online sexual harrassment and sexual abuse

Sexting is the sharing of indecent photos intended to make a person appear more grown up or sexually appealing. It is increasingly normal in relationships today. It is important to emphasise that once an image is sent, the sender loses control over it. It is illegal to hold or share indecent photos of anyone under age 18; those who do so can be registered as sex offenders. Upskirting is also illegal. It is taking a sexually intrusive picture taken up a person's skirt or under their clothing.

See our Safeguarding Policy for more information about child-on-child abuse.

Reputational damage

Unguarded online activity such as sexting can cause damage to a young person's reputation and severe emotional distress. Putting any form of inappropriate content online, either text or images, will often resurface later, such as at a future job interview. Young people can also damage the reputation of an institution by posting inappropriate or untrue comments.

Pornography

Access to pornographic images or videos, or to other unsuitable content, has never been easier. The damage this can do to a young person's perception of healthy relationships, or his/her ability to conduct normal sexual relationships in the future, is profound. The number of young people reported to be accessing pornography online suggests this is one of the most serious threats in modern culture to healthy relationships.

Sexual exploitation

One form of online exploitation is grooming. Grooming is persuading or enticing others to act in a way they were not intending to. There can be various motives, including sexual exploitation. Those intent on exploitation will often operate under a false identity. It can take place through social media or

gaming platforms. It can lead to a child sharing too much information, including contact details or location sharing, direct contact via webcams, or agreeing to meet in person.

Financial exploitation

Children and young people need to be alert to various forms of financial exploitation online. A child or young person can be groomed for the purposes of financial exploitation. Phishing is sending emails purporting to be from reputable companies in order to induce individuals to reveal personal information, such as passwords and credit card numbers. Another risk is from online games where participants can spend money to acquire an advantage in the game.

Extremism and radicalisation

Extremism has been defined as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It also includes calls for the death of armed service personnel serving at home or overseas. Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

See our Preventing Extremism Policy for more information.

Cybercrime

Young people can become involved in cybercrime, that is, criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. Examples include unauthorised access to computers ('hacking'), attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it, and making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software).

Computer viruses

Children and young people need to be aware of the risk from computer viruses to their own devices. Downloading files from all but the most trusted sources carries risk. This can especially be true from widely used illegal sites such as Putlocker (an illegal film distribution website).

Useful Links for Parents

Parent Control Software:
Qustodio
Family Link
NetNanny
Family Time

Guidance on keeping children safe online:
Parent Protect
Common Sense Media
Safer Internet
Childnet
NSPCC
Thinkuknow (run by CEOP, Child Exploitation and Online Protection)
Parentzone
Internet Matters
Ask About Games
Fight the new drug (The harms of pornography)