

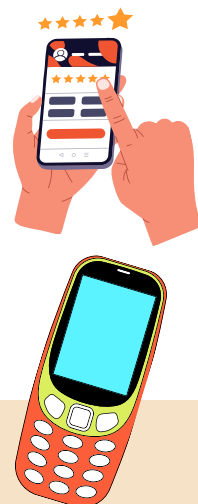
Coten End Primary School

Parent Smartphone Agreement

Annex 1

In partnership with parents, Coten End Primary School has a full ban on smartphones for children attending the school.

Where a phone is needed for communication between parent and child, we recommend a basic phone that does not have access to the internet. GPS tags can be used for peace of mind.



Coten End Primary School's position on smartphones

In view of mounting evidence that access to a personal smartphone is harmful for children, we recommend that children are not given a smartphone for personal use until the age of 14 at the earliest, ideally not until they reach 16.

Smartphones and smartwatches are banned for children at Coten End Primary School and cannot be brought onto the school site by pupils.

If children are found with a smartphone during the school day, the device will be confiscated by staff and returned to a parent or carer at the end of the school day.

We are aware that local secondary schools are also reviewing smartphone policies.

Smartphones are increasingly being shown to be harmful to children through:

- Exposure to harmful content
- Impact on mental health - evidence shows a direct link between early smartphone use and declining mental health
- Addiction - apps are packed with addictive features to keep children online
- Attention - hundreds of daily notifications make it hard for children to focus
- Opportunity cost - children spend less time outdoors and playing, reading, moving
- Family life - screen time and arguments about screens increasingly dominate
- Sleep - late night scrolling keeps kids up when they should be resting and blue light from screens makes it harder to fall asleep
- Grooming - TikTok, Snapchat, and Roblox are used by sexual predators to reach children with their first smartphone.
- Cyber bullying - arguments / fallouts now follow children home so there's no break

Evidence of harm to children from smartphones



Scan the code to access an easy-to-read summary of evidence on all the points above with links to the primary sources, such as surveys, university studies and government reports.

www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/the-issue/evidence

If you still wish your child to own a smartphone we ask you to carefully read and agree to the following:

We understand that if our child brings in a smartphone or smartwatch it will be confiscated by staff for the duration of the school day.

We recognise that the device belongs to the parent(s) and that the parent(s) is responsible for all content stored on the device or sent from the device – this includes, but is not limited to, images, messages and video content either generated on the phone by the child or by others.

We understand that any inappropriate content stored on or sent from the device at any time, even after being deleted, could have serious legal implications for the parent(s).

We recognise the importance of modelling and encouraging a healthy and responsible approach to smartphone use.

We will follow the below guidelines and expectations drawn up by school professionals in consultation with parents:

1. How our child will use their smartphone

We will not allow our child to access any apps or social media with an age rating beyond their age. This includes, but is not limited to, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube.

We will make sure our child does not use their smartphone in private spaces (bedrooms, toilets etc.)

We will make sure our child does not use their Smartphone before 8am and will agree with them a time between 5pm-6.30pm by which they will stop using it for the day.

2. How we will monitor and supervise our child using their smartphone

We will regularly monitor our child's smartphone usage, including the apps they use, websites they visit and messages they send.

We will use appropriate parental control tools and put in place safeguards to protect our children from potential online risk, with help from this recommended source of help on parental controls:

www.internetmatters.org

3. How school and parents will prepare children to use smartphones

School will deliver a robust Online Safety Education. We, as parents, will support school by talking about and actively engaging our children in online safety, privacy concerns, issues of cyberbullying and the potential consequences of inappropriate smartphone use.

4. How we will lead by example

We will model healthy smartphone habits by demonstrating responsible smartphone use, being mindful of excessive screen time and engaging in face-to-face interactions with our children and other family members.

We will limit our own phone use during family time and prioritise quality time together without distractions.

5. When things go wrong

We will support school in managing situations where our child is involved in inappropriate phone use and will trust the judgement of school in these situations.

Where there is inappropriate use, we will reconsider whether our child is ready to own a smartphone and consider advice from school professionals about this.

By committing to this Parent Agreement for Children's Smartphone Use, we aim to guide our children towards responsible and balanced smartphone usage, supporting their growth, well-being and positive digital citizenship.

Helpful resources



Scan here for helpful information on keeping children safe online, including parental controls across platforms and devices.

www.internetmatters.org

Find out about smartphone alternatives and GPS trackers at Smartphone Free Childhood. Some basic phones now come with GPS trackers.



www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives

Smartphone Free Childhood also have a local WhatsApp community for parents to share ideas, ask questions and hear what others are doing.