



Supporting Young People with Smartphone usage

Escalating societal pressures surrounding smartphone usage are increasingly affecting the mental health and overall well-being of children and adolescents. As we think about the shift towards prevention rather than cure, we want to place the emphasis on developing the emotional resilience of young people and providing strategies and tools that support a healthy relationship with technology.

Use our quick checklist to develop a robust approach as you help pupils with some of the 'exclusion anxiety' and communication problems that commonly arise:

1. Digital Wellness Education & Skills:

- Creating a Digital citizenship curriculum
- Teaching critical media literacy
- Explaining algorithm effects on content feeds
- Education around edited/filtered images
- Developing healthy boundaries with notifications
- Creating designated phone-free times and spaces

2. Mental Health Support Strategies:

- Regular check-ins about online experiences
- Teaching self-validation techniques
- Building offline self-esteem activities
- Encouraging open dialogue about social pressures
- Providing professional support when needed
- Peer support programs

3. Social Skills Development

- Practising face-to-face communication
- Building confidence in real-world interactions
- Developing conflict resolution skills
- Strengthening in-person friendships
- Encouraging offline group activities
- Social-emotional learning initiatives

4. Practical Implementation Tools e.g. Schools Mobile app

- Anti-cyberbullying protocols
- Using built-in screen-time monitors
- Setting up "Do Not Disturb" schedules
- Creating phone-free zones (especially bedrooms at night)
- Restricting access to inappropriate and 'threat' content
- Installing apps that promote digital wellness

5. Parent/Guardian Approaches

- Parent education workshops
- Establishing positive family technology patterns
- Modelling healthy phone habits
- Creating safe spaces to have non-judgmental conversations about online experiences
- Understanding current social media trends
- Supporting rather than shaming

6. Developing and Building Resilience

- Developing diverse interests beyond social media
- Strengthening identity outside of online presence
- Creating strong support networks
- Learning to handle social comparison
- Understanding temporary nature of trends