



Kildare Place School- Smart Phone Voluntary Code 2024.

Why has it been introduced?

Over the past few years, concern around young children having unsupervised access to the internet and social media has grown considerably.

There is an increasing body of evidence which has shown the detrimental effects of this excessive use of smart phones/devices on the developing brain especially on children under the age of 14 - socially, emotionally and educationally.

Dr. Mary Aiken, Ireland's foremost cyber safety expert stated back in 2018 that [smartphones should not be used by children under the age of fourteen](#).

Dr. Colman Noctor, is a Mental Health Nurse and Psychotherapist with a special interest in Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. He has over 25 years of international clinical experience and his research area is the impact of technology on young people's mental health:

- [Getting to grips with the effect of smartphones on education](#)
- [Survey: Majority of primary schools have problems with smartphone and social media use outside of school](#)
- [Colman Noctor: Why let a tech company decide when your child is ready to own a smartphone?](#)
- [Colman Noctor: Is there a right time to buy your child a smartphone?](#)

The National Parents Council has also highlighted the risks associated with smartphone use at a young age - cyber bullying, depression, access to pornographic content, vulnerability to contact from predators and an increased risk of suicide.

In January 2023, a SPHE teacher, Eoghan Cleary from Temple Carrig was interviewed on the Ryan Tubridy show and shared his [research findings regarding some of the detrimental impact smartphones is having on our children](#).

The Voluntary Code

We believe that this voluntary code offers parents and guardians who are concerned about their child having personal access to a smartphone, a tool to help address the above issues.

Collective agreement to hold off on a child owning a smartphone will reduce peer pressure and provide parents with the data to respond to possible pressure from their children for example: *85% of 4th class parents have opted into the "Smart Device Voluntary Code"*.

Additional resources:

- [Irish Times: Teenagers talk pornography](#)
- [Psych Central: How Smartphones Affect Child Development](#)
- [Webwise : information and support you need to ensure your child makes the most of their time online](#)
- [CyberSafeKids](#)

Click here to sign up to the KPS Code : <https://forms.gle/g6twfs8LWEbCimuU8>

Key points:

1. The Voluntary Code does **not** include regular mobile phones with no internet access.
2. All information is **anonymous** and results will be assimilated by class group as a percentage.
3. It recognises that every family has different priorities and opinions in relation to internet access and smartphone use.
4. If a parent /guardian **alters their view** subsequently and wants to purchase a personal smartphone device for their child(ren) they can do so at any stage.
5. It is not a solution in itself to the growing problem but it is potentially **one tool** which may be helpful to those who wish to avail of it.