



15th October 2024



Friday 25th October is an INSET day NO SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN ON THIS DAY

Smartphone Free Childhood

In recent months there has been growing awareness of the harmful effects of smartphones on young people's well-being. New research has received extensive media coverage and thousands of parents have joined national campaigns such as [Smartphone Free Childhood](#), in a bid to delay giving smartphones to their children.

A number of parents and carers from St Monica's have joined the Smartphone Free Childhood WhatsApp group and have signed the Smartphone Free Childhood Parent Pledge to delay giving their child(ren) a smartphone until at least the end of Year 9.

The problem

When we first started giving smartphones to children, we didn't understand their impact. Now, there is a growing body of evidence linking smartphone use with [an array of harms](#). Smartphones are linked closely with anxiety, depression and loneliness. They are a gateway to extreme content and unwanted communication. Research shows that smartphones affect academic performance and many children show signs of behavioural addiction to their devices.

I urge every parent to look at the [latest evidence](#) of the negative impact smartphones are having on children. This [powerful short film](#) gives a good summary of the problem. For a longer watch, [this talk](#) from the Psychologist Jonathan Haidt gives a more detailed rundown of the evidence and is a powerful watch.

Underpinning all these harms is one that is potentially the most significant of all. Smartphones are experience blockers, distracting children from engaging in the real world. The average UK 12-year-old now spends [29 hours a week](#) – equivalent to a part-time job – on their smartphone. This leaves little time for the real world activities and relationships that enable us to learn the essential life skills needed for the transition to adulthood.

It is not surprising that new research shows that the younger a child receives their first smartphone, [the worse their mental health](#). And yet, the age children are getting their first smartphone is getting younger and younger. In the UK, a fifth of 3-4 year olds own their own device and [24% of 5-7 year-olds](#) do.

The solution

I do not feel we can ignore the evidence any longer. I will be asking the Governing Body to determine, with me, whether we should make St Monica's a smartphone free school, and to possibly implement a new policy whereby smartphones are no longer allowed on school premises. The discussion is likely to be around the following points:

- to better safeguard the learning environment;
- ensure the welfare of all students;
- uphold the ethos of our school community;
- rules around smartphones might include confiscation of the phone with it being returned at the end of term; and
- children having access to only simple phones (provided by parents) if they need to be contactable on their way to and from school

As always, if there are exceptional circumstances that require a child to bring a smartphone into school each day, for example if it is used as a medical device, the request would be carefully considered and parents will be informed of the outcome.

We understand that many parents don't want to give their child a smartphone but feel they have no choice because everyone else is. No parent wants to isolate their child from their peer group. The solution to this problem lies in better regulation of the tech industry, but enacting legislation takes years – time that this

generation of children don't have. Meanwhile our most powerful defence lies in taking collective action at school and at home.

Therefore, we strongly encourage parents to resist the pressure from your children and their peers, and hold back on giving your children smartphones until **at least the end of year 9**. If we all work together, social pressure is removed, and no child is the odd one out.





Our children's futures are so important, to you and to us. In a world where fast-changing and unregulated technology is actually impacting the development of our children's brains, it is up to us to stand up for them, and their futures. All of our Pupil Voice groups will be completing a survey about mobile phones, as part of work we do with the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Cardiff Youth Council.

If you wish to take part in the discussions with the Governing Body about the pros and cons of becoming a smartphone free school, please let me know abigail.cuthbert@cardiff.gov.uk and I can invite you to the meeting where we will discuss school policy in more detail.

Parent Workshop
Wednesday 13th November 3.20-4.20pm
Sleep & Smartphones
 (Definitely not 'preachy' or telling you what to do!)
All very welcome to attend

[Sleep Survey Results](#)

All bedtimes should preferably be before 9pm on a school night (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) to ensure children have had enough sleep to sustain them during the busy school day. This may need to be earlier, especially if they also go to Breakfast Club and need to wake up earlier than 7.30am. The best bedtimes are often ones where children have been able to chat through positive aspects of their day, then read a bedtime story/read themselves, listen to music or an audio book. Using technology does not help with good sleep hygiene and often leads to children staying awake for longer with worse sleep quality. For more information about sleep and encouraging good habits, please come to our Parent Workshop on 13th November.

	<p>Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children say: 3 - 5 year olds need 10 - 13 hours sleep every night 6 - 12 year olds need 9 - 12 hours sleep every night</p> <p>We (St Monica's staff) recommend these bedtimes on a school night to wake up for 7.30am</p>	
	Reception = 6.30pm - 8pm	
	Year 1 = 7pm - 8.30pm	
	Year 2 = 7pm - 8.30pm	
	Year 3 = 7pm - 8.30pm	
	Year 4 = 7pm - 8.30pm	
	Year 5 = 7.30pm - 9pm	
	Year 6 = 7.30pm - 9pm	

Extra Curricular Sporting Activities

Sports Xtra provide an after school club for our children:

- Sports Xtra come each Wednesday afternoon
- They will offer two clubs as the number of pupils attending expands, they will run at the same time, 1 inside, the other outside
- Step 1 & 2 Club = Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3
- Step 3 Club = Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Each session is from 3.20 - 4.20pm
- Sessions are booked in blocks
- Block 2 is after half term, this will be for 7 sessions and costs £49

To book for the Step 1 & 2 club please use this link:

<https://campscui.active.com/orgs/SportsXtraCardiff?season=3499546&session=64016332>

To book for the Step 3 club please use this link:

<https://campscui.active.com/orgs/SportsXtraCardiff?season=3499546&session=64007544>

Extra Curricular Music Lessons

Rock Steady Music are offering extra music sessions for children to learn rock instruments/singing during the school day. If you have enquired about financial help towards the cost of these sessions, you will hear from Mrs Meakins either next week or the week after. If you are interested in these sessions for your child/children please sign up with them directly. They deal with all bookings.

www.rocksteadymusicschool.com

Support with the costs of education

We do know how expensive supporting your child's education can be. There is additional money and support families can have but this has to be applied for with the Local Authority. Although all primary aged children are automatically eligible for free school meals, if families are able to apply for this the school receives more money in its budget each year. There is also a School Essentials Grant, this money is paid directly to families.

[Apply for Free School Meals : Cardiff Council Forms](#)

[School Essentials Grant - Cardiff Council Forms](#)

Next in the newsletter - our usual information

Links to Step webpages

Contact details for staff

Dates for the diary - **if it is highlighted yellow - family can attend too**

Parent Pay links

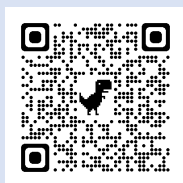
Donation button

Links to the School Website

For up to date information about:

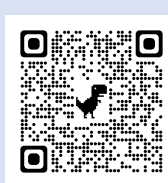
what your child is learning in school, PE days & home learning tasks

Step 1 Web Pages



Reception / Year 1

Step 2 Web Pages



Years 2 & 3

Step 3 Web Pages



Years 4, 5 & 6

Keeping your child safe is our key priority - [this link](#) takes you to a poster which explains what we do if we have concerns about a child's safety. It also explains what you can do if you have concerns about a child or member of staff's conduct.

Contact details for staff

We MUCH prefer a face-to-face chat rather than an email, however, we know that for some parents, getting hold of us at the right time can be tricky.

For questions about Parent Pay or music lessons contact Mrs Fedorova: Jozefina.fedorova@cardiff.gov.uk

To make an appointment to speak directly with (or see) the Head Teacher contact Miss Williams: Debra.williams@cardiff.gov.uk

To email the Head Teacher: abigail.cuthbert@cardiff.gov.uk

To email the Deputy Head Teacher: mrsmeakins@stmonicasschool.co.uk

To email the Additional Needs Co-ordinator: mrsogorman@stmonicasschool.co.uk

To email any teacher:

Step 1	Reception = Mrs Vaughan Year 1 = Mrs Irwin	mrsvaughan@stmonicasschool.co.uk mrsirwin@stmonicasschool.co.uk
Step 2	Year 2 = Mrs Knight Year 3 = Mrs O’Gorman & Mrs Meakins	mrsknight@stmonicasschool.co.uk mrsogorman@stmonicasschool.co.uk mrsmeakins@stmonicasschool.co.uk
Step 3	Year 4 = Mr Wycherley Year 5 = Mr Thomas Year 6 = Miss Hampson	mrwycherley@stmonicasschool.co.uk morthomas@stmonicasschool.co.uk misshampson@stmonicasschool.co.uk

We try to answer all emails within 24 hours, if your query is really urgent please phone the school 029 2023 3925. **To help preserve the family life of teachers, I have asked them not to respond to any emails outside of the normal working day or at weekends.** Most parents find asking the parent WhatsApp group for their child’s year group really helpful too.

Dates for your diary

I am not able to authorise any absence for term time holiday or any extended time away from school. Please do not be tempted to take your child out of school during term time.

School term dates

			Thursday 17th October	Friday 18th October
			Y2 leading worship Colorfoto - School Photo Day 4pm Finance, Premises and H&S GB committee	2.30pm Praise and Celebration
Monday 21st October	Tuesday 22nd October	Wednesday 23rd October	Thursday 24th October	Friday 25th October
10.35 Pupil Voice meetings Period Dignity Talks for some Y4 girls and all Y5/6 girls		Worship - Rev. Caroline	Y1 leading worship 4pm Standards GB committee	INSET DAY No school for children

Half term break - no school for 1 week

Monday 4th November	Tuesday 5th November	Wednesday 6th November	Thursday 7th November	Friday 8th November
Children return to school - breakfast club as usual		Worship - Rev. Caroline		9am Helping Hands at The Table - postponed 2.30pm Praise and Celebration
Monday 11th November	Tuesday 12th November	Wednesday 13th November	Thursday 14th November	Friday 15th November
Cardiff Central Fire Station Officers come to school to see Y2 & Y5	Anti Bullying Week - live lessons 9pm Parent Space Meeting - online https://meet.google.com/xrf-gxfx-ett	Worship - Rev. Caroline 3.20 - 4.20 Parent Workshop Sleep & Smartphones	2pm Step 3 - Parish Eucharist Interfaith Event - 6-8pm More details to come	
Monday 18th November	Tuesday 19th November	Wednesday 20th November	Thursday 21st November	Friday 22nd November
10.35 Pupil Voice meetings		Worship - Rev. Caroline	Reception leading worship	2.30pm Praise and Celebration
Monday 25th November	Tuesday 26th November	Wednesday 27th November	Thursday 28th November	Friday 29th November
		Worship - Rev. Caroline	4pm Full GB meeting	9am Helping Hands at The Table
Monday 2nd December	Tuesday 3rd December	Wednesday 4th December	Thursday 5th December	Friday 6th December
10.35 Pupil Voice meetings	9pm Parent Space Meeting - online https://meet.google.com/xrf-gxfx-ett	Worship - Rev. Caroline	Parish Eucharist - Step 3	2.30pm Praise and Celebration
Monday 9th December	Tuesday 10th December	Wednesday 11th December	Thursday 12th December	Friday 13th December
	Christmas Performances Step 1 10am & 2pm	Christmas Performances Step 3 10am & 2pm	Christmas Performances Step 2 10am & 2pm	10.35am Rock Steady Music Concert for parents & the school
Monday 16th December	Tuesday 17th December	Wednesday 18th December	Thursday 19th December	Friday 20th December
10.35 Pupil Voice meetings	11.30am Carols at The Table	6pm Carols at St Michael's		Last day of term

Christmas Break - no school for 2 weeks

Booking Lunches

Please could parents **book lunch for their child the day before they need it** – it takes up a huge amount of time each day for teachers to ask each child what they would like. Parents are able to book lunches and make menu choices a week in advance.

Please do this using Parent Pay. <https://app.parentpay.com/public/client/security/v2/#/login>

Booking your child's meal is essential!

Helping Hands

The school is very well-supported by parents and the local community. There is an active Helping Hands group, who work very well together to organise fun, fundraising events and support learning in school. They have their own website where all dates for meetings and minutes are shared. [Helping Hands Web Page](#)

There are also WhatsApp groups for parents and carers for each Progression Step. **THANK YOU** to the parents who have agreed to be group admins for these groups. It is helpful for parents to join the relevant group/s to be able to keep informed and help answer any questions – there is no such thing as a daft question – we've all been there with last minute queries that need an urgent answer! The school office will pass on your details should you wish to join a group.

How to donate to St Monica's

There are many ways you could help in school, the first step is to either:

- come to the monthly Helping Hands meetings at The Table, or
- join the Helping Hands WhatsApp group, or
- join the online Parent Space meetings held at 9pm once per month

We welcome any donations, whether they be:

- **donations of time** (become a regular walker for trips to the park, listen to children read, help with fundraising events)
- **donations of resources** (Step webpages will have resource lists of things they may need to help with a particular learning context or with things needed for Christmas plays)
- **donations of money** (to help support trips or special events in school)

Donations Greatly Received!!!

Our donation button is active on Parent Pay – thank you to those people who have found it. Our new target is to ensure that every child can access educational trips. You can get to the link by clicking anywhere in this text, or by visiting the school website...

www.stmonicasschool.co.uk



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CEFNOGWCH BANC BWYD CAERDYDD

HARVEST APPEAL
HELP SUPPORT CARDIFF FOODBANK

THANK YOU

St Monica's Primary School

You have collected **114 kg** as part of our harvest appeal.
This will provide **10** local people with a three day
emergency food parcel.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



BOOK YOUR PLACE OCTOBER 2024

8AM-5PM EVERYDAY

- Cardiff High School, The Vale Resort & Llanishen High School 3G
- Activities to suit all including Football, Multisports, Laser Tag, Learn to Cycle and much more!



£29 Per Day
DISCOUNTED DAY RATE

Code:
CAMPDAY29

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COACHES

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INSTRUMENTS OF INDIA

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REGISTER NOW TO SECURE YOUR PLACE!

SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW

FREE TASTER SESSIONS THIS TERM -
£55 PER TERM

START DATE: 26TH SEPTEMBER 2024



www.cfmusiceducation.co.uk

Thursdays

4-5pm: age 4-10

5-6pm: age 10-18

Cardiff & Vale Music

Education

1st Floor, Chapter Arts

Centre, Canton



2024

Children's October Half Term Activities Llanover Hall Arts Centre

Wednesday 30th October

- 10am-12pm Little Artists: "Halloween Joy!" Painting (5-8yrs)
- 10am-12pm Little Potters: Penguins, Polar Bears and Igloos (5-8yrs)
- 10am-12pm Harry Potter Inspired Drawing and Painting (8yrs+)
- 10am-12pm Scented Soap Making (8yrs+)
- 1pm-3pm Create your own Potions and Spells Little Book (5-8yrs)
- 1pm-3pm Clay Club: Throwing on the Wheel (8yrs+)
- 1pm-3pm Autumn Lanterns Art and Crafts (8yrs+)



Thursday 31st October

- 10am-12pm Little Potters: Clay Witches and Wizards (5-8yrs)
- 10am-12pm Autumn Glow Decorative Candles (8yrs+)
- 10am-12pm Halloween Decorations Arts and Crafts (8yrs+)
- 1pm-3pm Clay Club: Halloween Clay Glowing Pumpkins (8yrs+)
- 1pm-3pm Mixed Media Autumn Wreaths (5-8yrs)

Friday 1st November

- 10am-12pm Autumn Leaves Mixed Media Drawing and Painting (8yrs+)
- 10am-12pm Little Potters: The Clay Tree Project (5-8yrs)
- 10am-12pm Kaleidoscope Leaf hand Dyed Scarves (8yrs+)
- 1pm-3pm Clay Club: Clay Lamp Making Workshop (8yrs+)
- 1pm-3pm Felt Hedgehogs and Autumn Creatures (5-8yrs)
- 1pm-3pm Nightmare before Christmas Inspired Drawing and Painting (8yrs+)



Let's Act Presents ...Halloween Tales!

Wednesday 30th October to Friday 1st November

10am-3pm Ages 8-12 years

Join us this Halloween for three spooktacular days filled playing drama games, creating new scripts and being part of a brand new live theatre show based around spooky Halloween stories!

Friends and family show on the final afternoon!

*Please note we are unable to enrol any children under 5 years of age.

*Any children attending 2 hour courses wishing to stay during the lunch break will require a responsible adult to supervise.



£9.00 per 2 hour session except Little Potters and Clay Club which are £10.00 per 2 hour session each.

Lets Act Presents course £60.00

Call now to book a place

029 20872030

