

Smartphone Free Childhood update – January 2026

Over the past few weeks, the age restrictions on social media have made the press. After the changes being made in Australia, the [Smartphone Free Childhood](#) movement in the UK have been trying to get the Government to review the social media age. In just five days MPs around the country received nearly a quarter of a million letters asking them to raise the issue in Parliament. The government listened and on 20 January they made an announcement on smartphones, social media and children.

Key points to come out of Government's latest announcement.

1. There will be a national consultation on children's use of technology. This will include considering raising the age of social media to 16, looking at addictive features like infinite scroll and better age checks and enforcement within apps and technology.
2. Schools are expected to be smartphone-free by default. Phones should be kept out of lessons, breaks and lunch. Ofsted will now be checking phone policies and how well they are implemented in schools during their inspections. Any schools that are struggling to implement changes will be given more support to ensure they can be smartphone-free.
3. The Government will publish guidance including screen time guidance for parents of 5-16 year olds and updated guidance for under-fives.

The government will be taking advice from other countries who have implemented changes and visiting Australia to see how the changes have been made to the social media age over there and the impact it is having.

These are all positive steps that will hopefully help to change the way social media and technology is used by children, however there is still a long way to go.

Further information and updates on this issue can be found on the [Smartphone Free Childhood website](#).

If you would like to be more directly involved in the Smartphone Free Childhood movement, by joining the Working Group to advocate and share information, please speak to one of the Working Group (named below) or contact Steph directly. We'd love to hear from you!

Thanks

Parents at The Lanes Smartphone Free Childhood Working Group

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