



# Parent and Carer Information Webinar

## Our Mission: Helping Young People Thrive

*At Blackout, we help young people build healthy, responsible digital habits. Working with schools and families, we support learning, wellbeing and safeguarding by removing smart device use in school, while giving young people and parents autonomy outside school. We focus on building skills for life beyond the classroom, supporting lifelong digital learners.*

# Our 3 pillars: Culture, evidence, education

## **Inclusive, distraction-free school culture**

Establishing clear expectations that create a level playing field, supporting an inclusive environment where all pupils can focus, engage and thrive.

## **Evidence-led safeguarding and whole-school improvement**

Providing real-time, evidence-led insights to strengthen safeguarding, support consistency, and enable measurable whole-school improvement.

## **Digital responsibility and lifelong digital skills**

Supporting pupils to develop safe, responsible and informed digital behaviours, underpinned by strong digital literacy that extends beyond the school day.

***'A digital solution to a digital problem.'***

## **Why teach students to use phones well?**

Understand how algorithms and persuasive design work

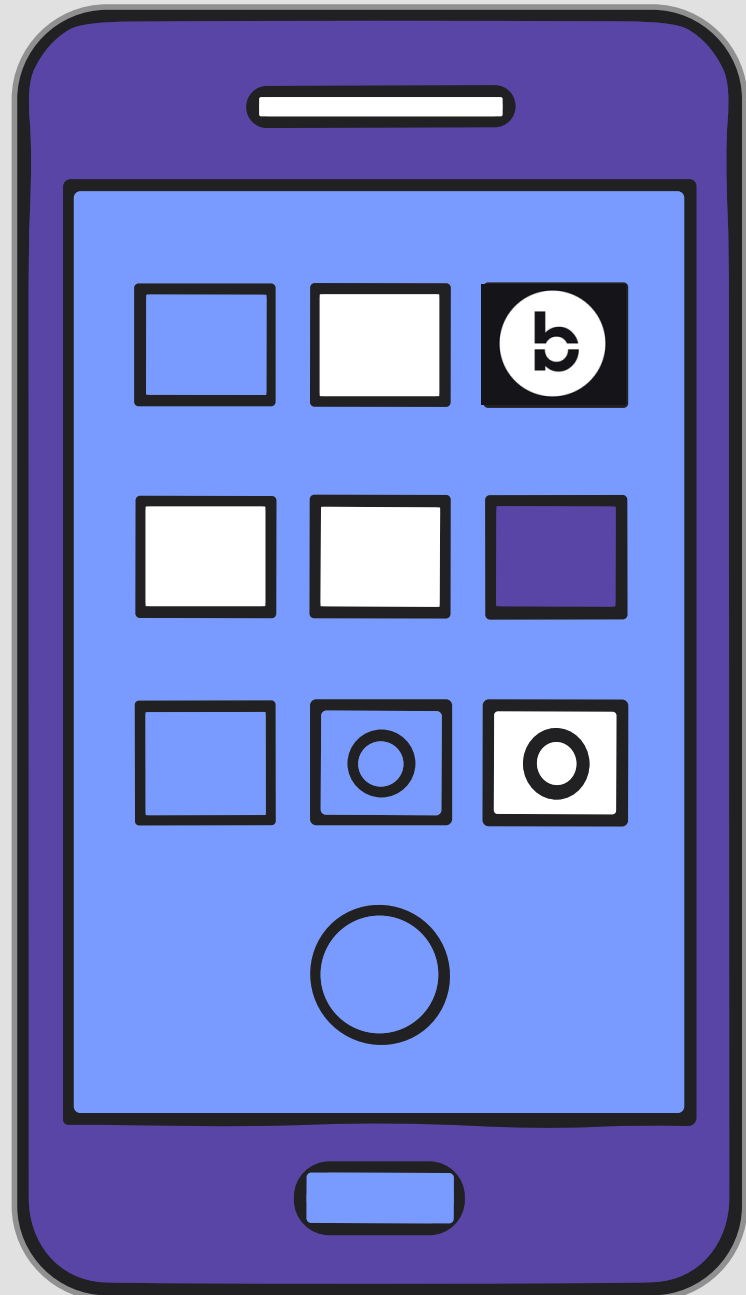
Safeguarding and wellbeing in a digital world

Digital behaviours are changing faster than policy

Build focus and healthy technology habits

Develop digital literacy for the future

## What is the Blackout app?



Using a schedule set by the school, Blackout restricts non-essential apps, such as social media and games, during the school day

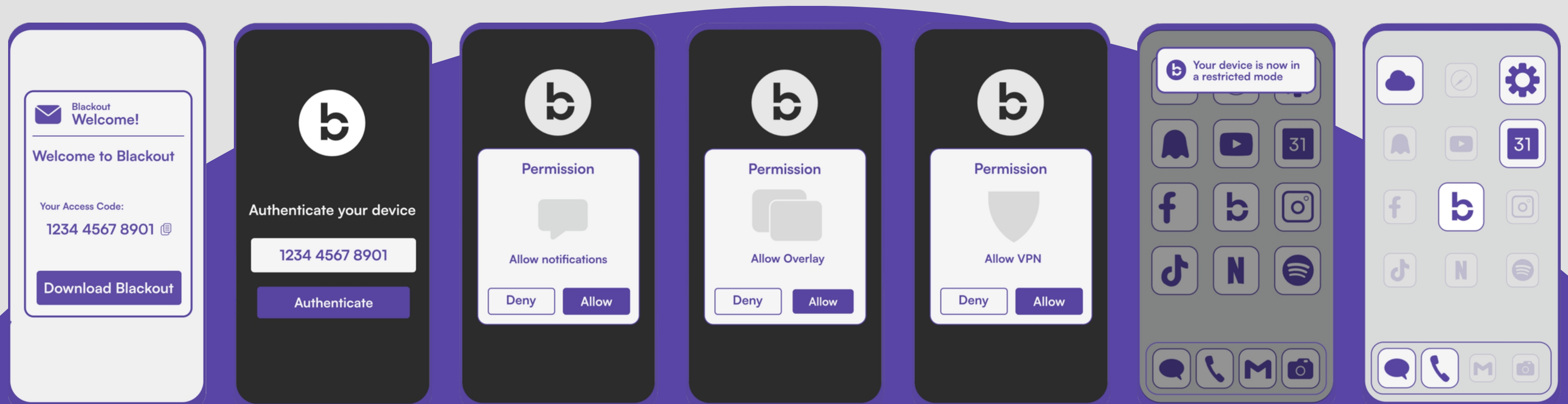
Blackout keep essential functions like phone calls and SMS available for safety and practicality.

Through secure, real-time reporting, Blackout helps schools monitor use, strengthen safeguarding, and understand how effectively their phone policy is being followed.

Blackout does not collect any personal data beyond name, email, device type and year group.

# How is Blackout set up?

1. Students will receive an email with a link to download the app and a code.
2. Students then download the app and enter the code to begin the setup.
3. Once set up, during the school day, all non-essential apps will be blocked, and all essential apps will remain unblocked in case of emergencies.
4. At the end of the school day, the phone will automatically go back to normal.



# Teaching autonomy and responsible phone use

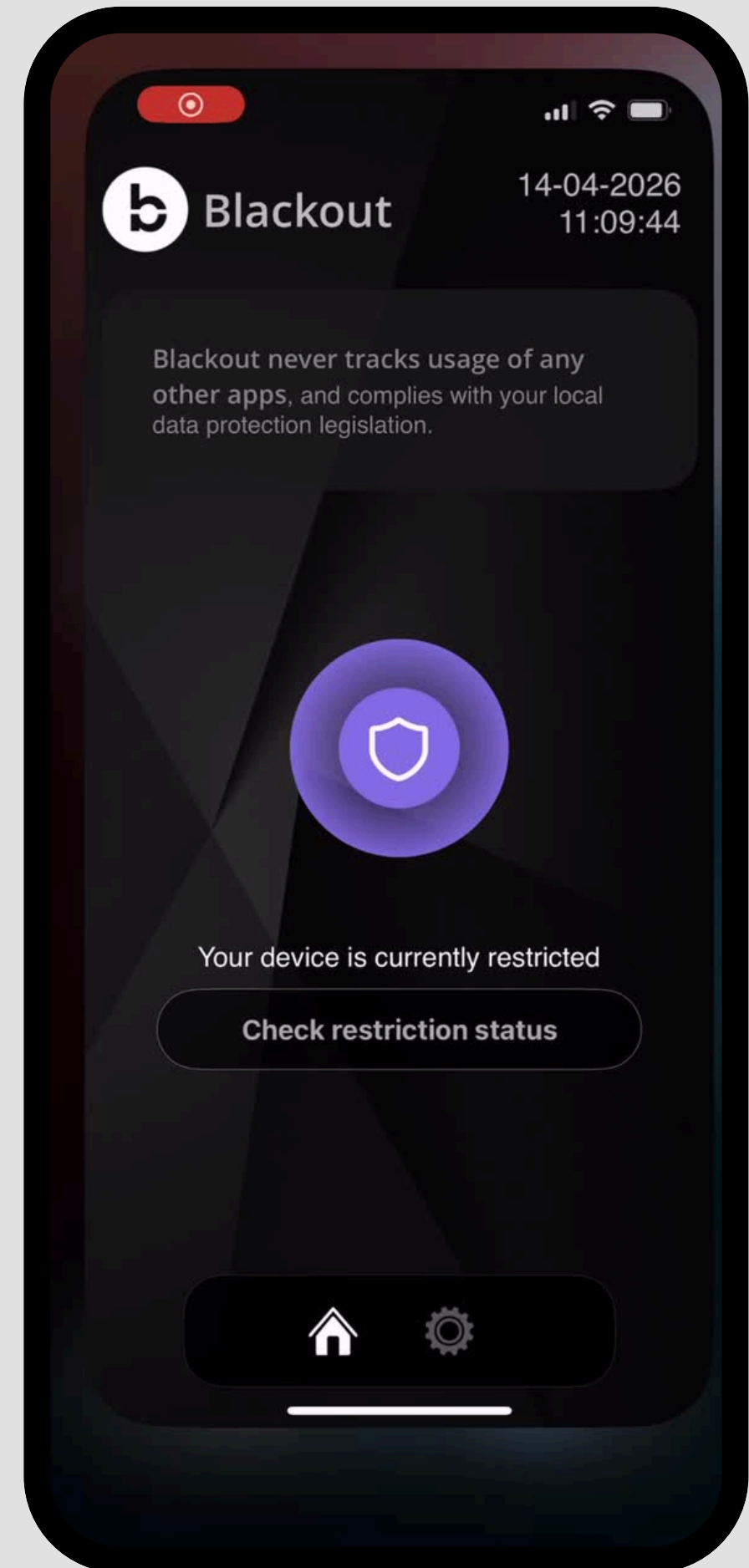
This is about more than managing behaviour. It's about safeguarding and helping students learn to use technology responsibly and to practice making good decisions:

Blackout allows students to temporarily disable restrictions for:

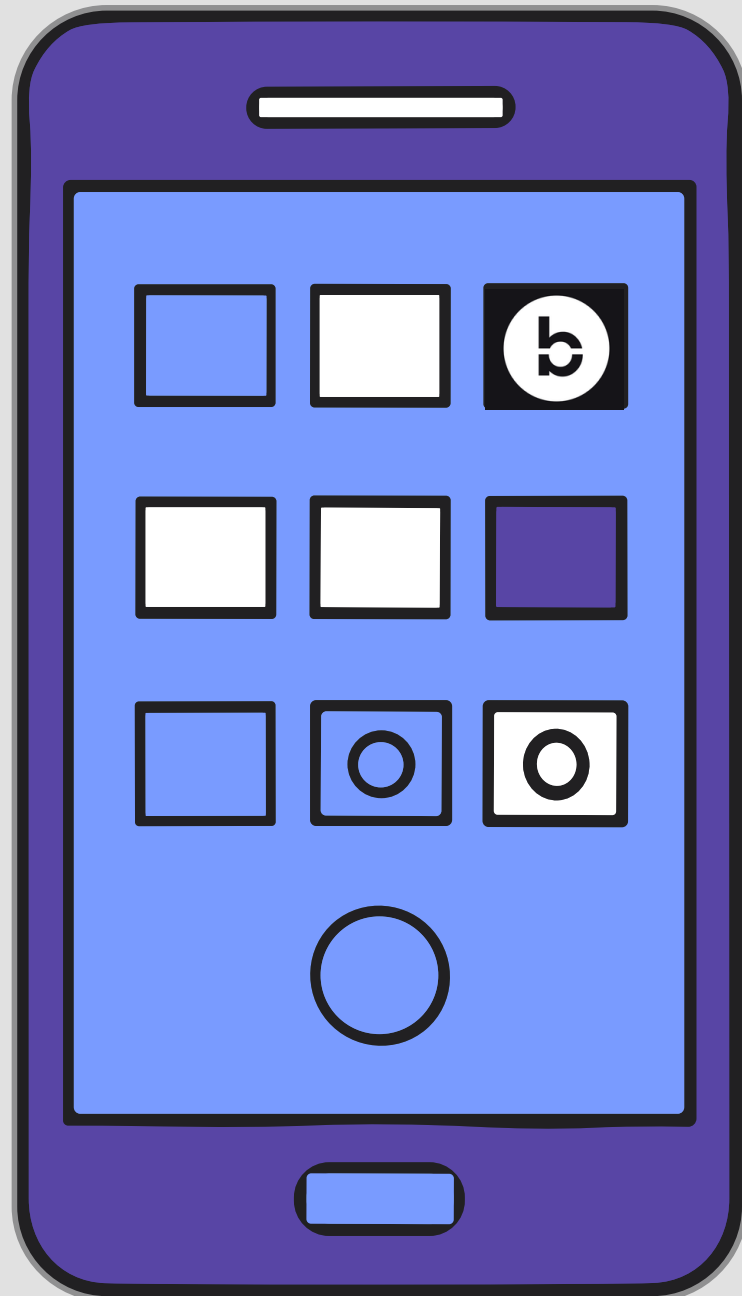
- Emergencies
- Medical needs
- Approved school exceptions

This keeps students accountable while giving them appropriate independence.

The aim is to build safe, balanced habits that last beyond school.



# Frequently Asked Questions



## What information does Blackout collect?

To set up and operate Blackout we collect:

- Student name
- School email address
- Year group
- Device type

During normal operation we also record limited operational information to ensure the app is working correctly, such as:

- Device status (e.g. blocked, unblocked or disabled)
- Permission status
- Battery level
- Whether the device has recently connected
- The number of times blocked apps have been attempted during a blocking period

We do **not** collect messages, photos, browsing history, location, contacts or the content of apps.

## Can I still contact my child in case of an emergency?

Yes. Emergency calls and SMS remain available in line with the school communication policy.

## Does Blackout use my data or drain my battery?

No. Blackout uses around 578KB per day – that's less than 1MB. It has almost no impact on your data or your battery.

For context, many popular apps use far more data each day:

- TikTok: 500-900MB
- Instagram: 300-600MB
- Snapchat: 350-700MB

## What permissions does Blackout need?

Blackout only requires 4 (Apple devices) / 5 (Android devices):

- Screen time/Usage setting
- Background refresh / Overlay settings
- Notifications
- VPN
- Do not disturb (Android only)

These permissions allow Blackout to run smoothly and apply the school's blocking schedule.

Visit our website for more FAQs:  
<https://www.blackout-technologies.com/faqs>

## What can school staff see?

School staff can see the status of a student's Blackout app, along with limited operational information needed to support the rollout.

They **cannot** see messages, photos, browsing history, websites visited or the content of any apps.

## Who can see this information?

Only your school's approved Blackout staff and the Blackout admin account lead. No one else.

## Where is data stored?

Data is securely hosted on AWS servers located in Dublin (Ireland). This allows us to comply with both UK GDPR and EU GDPR. Data is not sold or used for any third-party purposes.

## Can I use parental controls with Blackout?

Yes. Blackout does not block any parental controls and works alongside them, such as Google Family Link, Apple Screen time and Life 360

# Why is this so important now?

1

## Curriculum Review for 2028

- Stronger focus on preparing young people for the digital world.
- Greater emphasis on digital literacy, media literacy, and AI.
- We can support schools to support this learning.

2

## DfE's 'Mobile phones in school' guidance

- Government guidance expects schools to be smart phone-free environments.
- Schools should be able to evidence how they are implementing this.
- Tools like Blackout help schools create and demonstrate a smart phone-free culture.

# Wider Blackout!

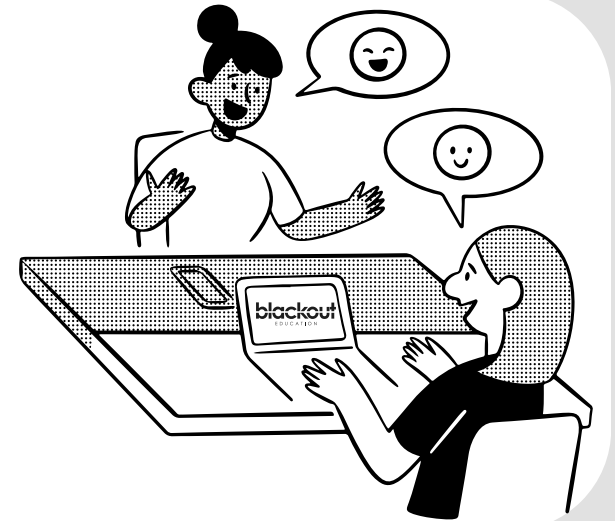
**1**

**Resources  
(co-created  
with schools)**



**2**

**Student voice and  
user research**



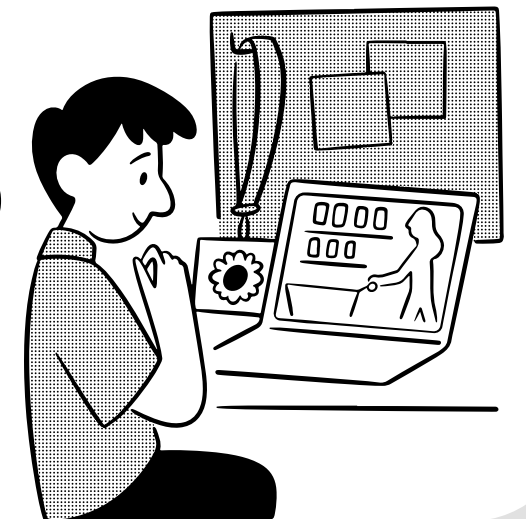
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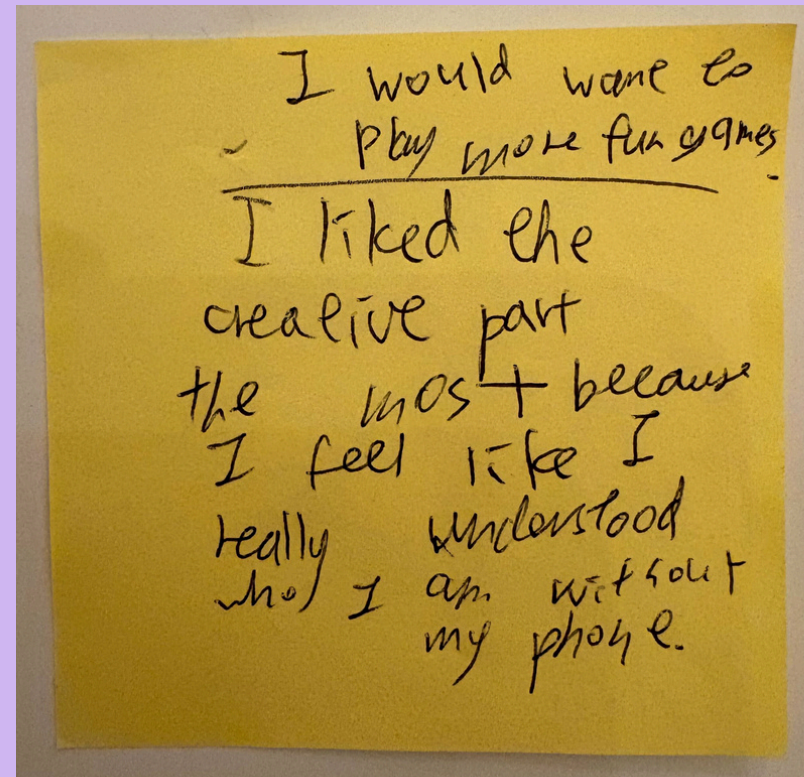
**Activity Days**



**4**

**Digital Citizenship  
Programme**

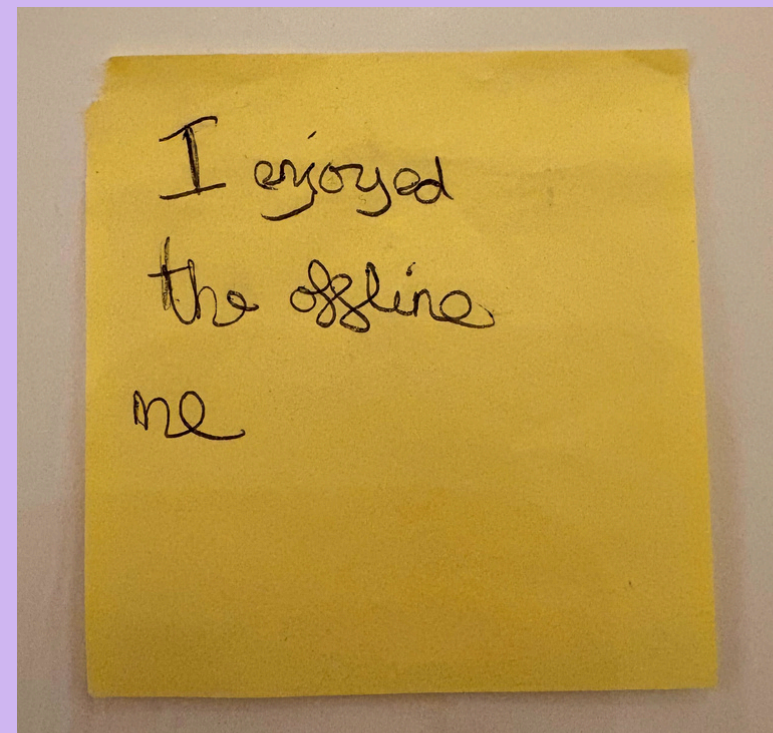




I would want to  
play more fun games  
I liked the  
creative part  
the most because  
I feel like I  
really understood  
who I am without  
my phone.

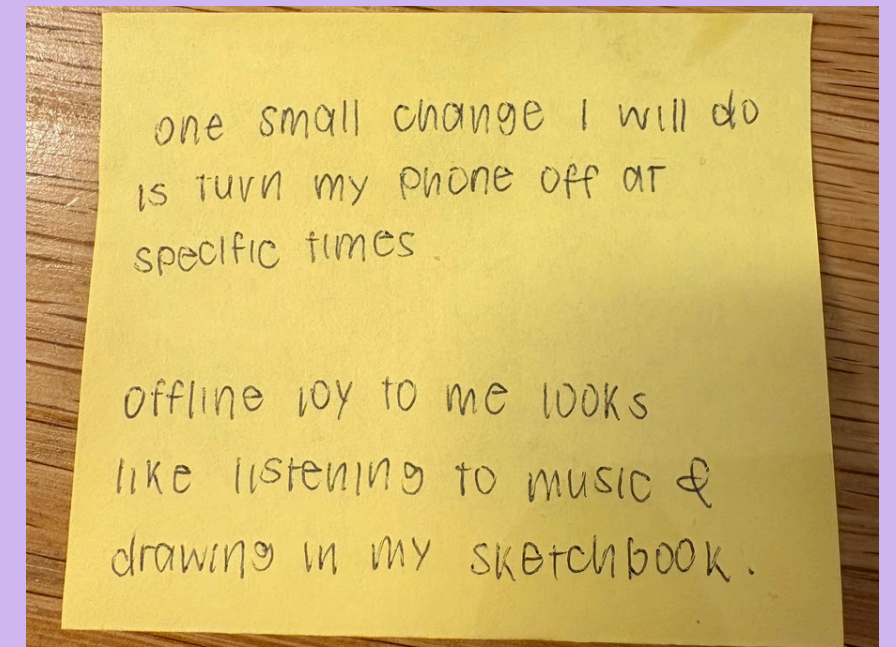
“I feel like I  
really  
understood  
who I am  
without my  
phone.”

“I enjoyed the  
offline me.”

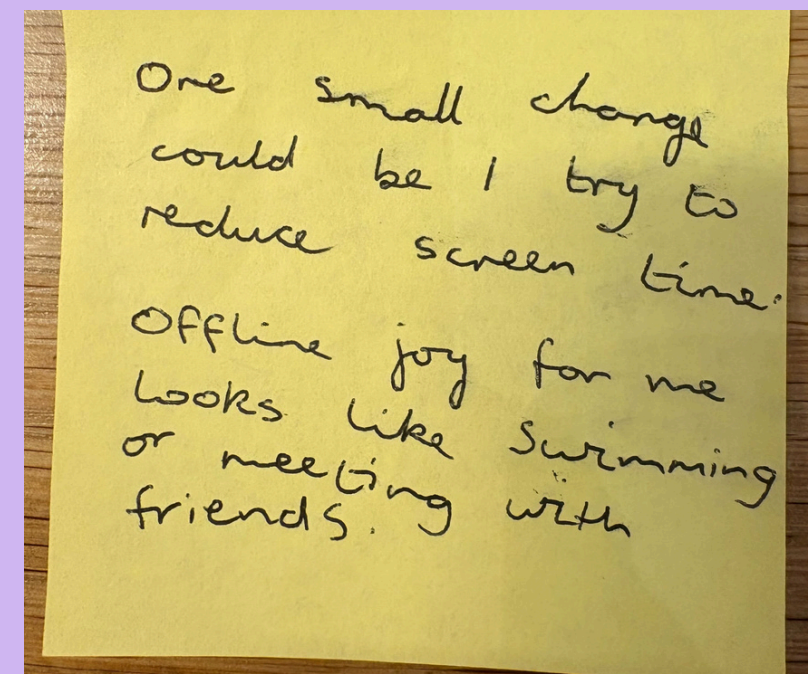


I enjoyed  
the offline  
me

“Offline joy to  
me looks like  
listening to  
music &  
drawing”



one small change I will do  
is turn my phone off at  
specific times.  
offline joy to me looks  
like listening to music &  
drawing in my sketchbook.



One small change  
could be I try to  
reduce screen time.  
Offline joy for me  
looks like swimming  
or meeting with  
friends.

“One small  
change could  
be I try to  
reduce my  
screen time”



# Thank you for listening!

- Automatically blocks social media, games, the camera, and other non-essential apps during school hours.
- Phone calls, SMS, digital wallets, and other essential functions always remain available for safety and emergencies.
- Students can temporarily unblock their device if needed; school staff are notified to ensure it was appropriate.
- Runs automatically on a school-set timetable - no GPS or location tracking.
- Minimal data required: student name, email, device type, and year/form group.
- Only operational data is collected (e.g. device status, battery level, connection status, and blocked app attempts) – no personal content, location data nor activity elsewhere on the phone.

**Our goal is to help students develop healthy, independent relationships with their phones - equipping them with digital habits and self-regulation skills for the future.**

# Appendix - further information


## How we help equip young people for the digital world



**Blackout Technologies | Education**


Constant use of smart devices is reshaping the way young people think, feel and relate to the world around them. Social media can lead to anxieties, distraction and online bullying.

 [blackout-technologies.com](https://blackout-technologies.com)



**FAQs**

The Blackout App is a device management solution for employers to help restrict functionality on personal smart devices during working hours, or while the device is within a controlled zone.

 [blackout-technologies.com](https://blackout-technologies.com)

# Curriculum and Assessment Review

The Curriculum Review offers a useful lens on how education is responding to rapid technological change and an uncertain future shaped by AI. At its core, the Review emphasises not only academic knowledge but also lifelong learning and essential “human skills” such as judgement, adaptability, empathy, and resilience.

## Key Messages from the Review

- Pupils face algorithmic influence, persuasive design and misinformation from an early age.
- Schools must build confident, critical and discerning digital users.

## Curriculum Focus

- How platforms shape behaviour and attention.
- The impact of digital content on identity, relationships and decision making.
- Responsible technology use and awareness of online harms are to be compulsorily taught.

## Why It Matters

- Especially critical for adolescent boys, who are more sensitive to influence and risk.
- Central to safeguarding and pupil wellbeing.

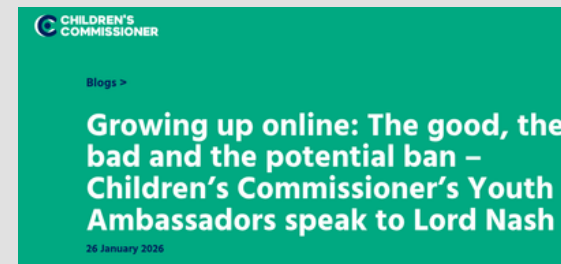
# What does current discourse say?

UK consulting on bringing in social media ban for under 16s

Make sure pupils don't ever use phones at school, Phillipson tells teachers

More than 60 Labour MPs urge Starmer to back under-16s social media ban

Schools should be phone-free zones, education secretary tells headteachers



Council encourages schools to ban phones

Schools in England should be phone-free all day, education secretary says

## Potential benefits

- May reduce exposure to harmful or age-inappropriate content during key developmental years, improving mental health.
- Gives parents and schools clearer authority to set boundaries around social media and smart device use
- Signals a stronger national stance on platform accountability and child protection
- Keeps digital wellbeing firmly on the public and political agenda
- Could contribute to international momentum if adopted alongside similar measures in other countries
- Supports the 'Online Safety Act', which already requires platforms to protect children and require age-appropriate safeguards.

## Potential limitations and risks

- Risk of offering a rapid response to what is a complex, systemic issue
- Does not address the underlying design of platforms, particularly algorithmic systems that monetise attention
- There is a need for early education and lifelong digital literacy skills
- May push some young people towards less regulated or harder-to-monitor online spaces
- For some young people, social media provides an important space for connection, identity, and community
- Without parallel investment in education, parental support, and offline opportunities, the impact may be limited

While age-based restrictions may offer short-term protection, they are unlikely to succeed in isolation. Lasting change requires a joined-up approach: regulation of platform design, education for young people and parents, cultural norms around technology use, and meaningful alternatives for connection offline.

# Your Questions

## **How will the school ensure students install and use Blackout?**

There will be a choice of how to comply with the school's smartphone-free policy. Options include using Blackout, using a basic brick mobile phone, or no phone. To support implementation, authorised school staff will have access to a dashboard that shows whether students have installed and activated the app. This helps the school identify students who may not be complying with the policy or who are experiencing technical difficulties.

Where concerns are identified, the school's mobile phone and behaviour policies will be followed, and any consequences will be applied as appropriate.

## **My child already has parental controls and doesn't use social media. Do they still need Blackout?**

Yes. We strongly encourage families to continue using parental controls, and Blackout works alongside them.

Blackout serves a different purpose during the school day by creating a consistent approach for all students and supporting the school's smartphone policy. We recommend using the built-in parental controls provided by Apple and Android devices, such as Apple Family Sharing and Google Family Link. These are generally considered the most effective parental control tools and work very well alongside Blackout.

Some third-party parental control apps, such as Kidslox, may occasionally experience compatibility issues. They are also often less extensively tested and supported by device manufacturers than the built-in Apple and Android controls. If you experience any difficulties, please reach out.

## **What happens if my child is absent from school?**

If a student is off sick or absent for another valid reason, they can disable the app and provide the reason. This alerts school staff, who can cross-reference the information with attendance records.

# Your Questions

## **Why use Blackout instead of locked phone pouches?**

Blackout is a digital solution to a digital problem. It delivers the benefits of a phone-free school day while helping students develop healthy digital habits for life.

Key benefits include:

- Blocks distracting apps and notifications during the school day
- Allows students to keep their phone for essential communication and safety
- Encourages self-regulation and responsible smartphone use, rather than relying solely on physical restrictions
- Helps students build lifelong digital habits that extend beyond school
- Avoids the practical challenges of pouches and lockers, such as distribution, collection, storage, damage and workarounds
- Provides schools with visibility of compliance and engagement through the Blackout dashboard

## **Will students find ways around it?**

As with any phone policy, some students may attempt to find workarounds. Similar challenges exist with phone pouches, lockers and other approaches.

Blackout is continuously developed in line with updates from Apple and Android, and we work closely with platform providers to ensure the app remains as effective and reliable as possible. New features, improvements and security updates are released regularly in response to both school feedback and changes in technology.

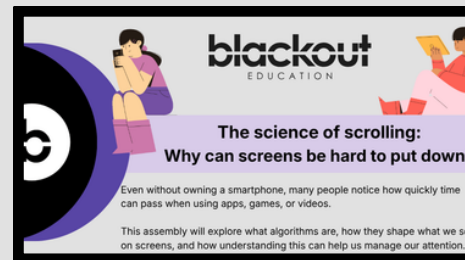
Importantly, Blackout provides schools with visibility of whether students have installed and activated the app, making it easier to identify potential non-compliance and follow up where necessary. While no solution can guarantee 100% compliance, Blackout combines technology, visibility and school policy to create a robust and practical approach to managing smartphone use during the school day.

# A holistic approach

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## Resources - assemblies, lessons

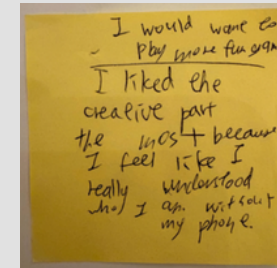
We provide students with practical, age-appropriate resources that encourage self-reflection and raise awareness of digital responsibility and wellbeing. Through assemblies such as "When it's online, it can feel not real", we explore issues like desensitisation, empathy, and remembering there is always a real person behind a username - encouraging students to pause and think before they text, post or send. Alongside this, we offer posters and flyers focused on digital wellbeing, as well as clear guidance that helps students manage and troubleshoot the Blackout app themselves, supporting independence and a sense of ownership over their digital habits.



2

## Digital Detox Days

Our Digital Detox Days are designed to give students intentional time away from their phones through activities such as yoga, mindful movement and creative art. These days create space for students to slow down, reset and reconnect, supporting wellbeing and inclusivity for all learners. They also help schools address an important part of digital education - understanding not just what technology is used for, but how and why it's used. By encouraging healthier digital habits and developing human skills like reflection, communication and emotional awareness, these experiences support focus, wellbeing and lifelong learning. Following consistently positive feedback, we continue to expand this work, supporting more schools to embed moments of calm, balance and responsible technology use into everyday school life.



*"I feel like I really understood who I am without my phone."*



*"It was fun and calming, helped me focus better"*

3

## Digital Citizenship Programme

Our Digital Citizenship Programme is designed to build students' digital responsibility and confidence, helping them navigate the online world with awareness, balance and respect. The engaging four-session course for Years 7–11 covers online safety and algorithms, emotional wellbeing, respectful communication and personal purpose, supporting students to understand how digital spaces shape behaviour, mood and decision-making. Through practical discussion, reflection and a final personal project, students develop the skills to manage their digital lives thoughtfully and earn an official Digital Citizenship Certificate. The programme encourages students to pause and reflect on their own habits, asking them to consider: what's one immediate change you could make to improve your digital wellbeing?

