



Parent poll on smartphones

Parentkind



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Key findings

Support for a ban on smartphones for under 16s

58% of parents would support the idea of introducing a ban on smartphones for under 16s, while 33% of parents oppose the idea.

Support for a ban on smartphones for under 16s is significantly higher amongst parents of primary school children (77%) and lower amongst parents of secondary school children (16%), although there is some indication that parents of secondary school children may be more supportive of a ban on smartphones for children at younger ages (e.g. under 12s).

Of parents whose children have a smartphone, 35% support the proposal for a ban on smartphones for children under 16 and 55% oppose a ban. Of parents whose children don't have a smartphone, 84% support the proposal for a ban on smartphones for children under 16 and 10% oppose a ban.

Benefits and risks of smartphones

Parents agree that smartphones come with a number of potential benefits to them and their child. 82% of parents felt that their children being able to get in contact with them at any time was an important benefit, and 61% of parents felt that being able to see their child's location at any time if they wanted to was important. Around half of parents (44%) felt it was important to help children be able to keep in contact with friends outside school, and for their child to use apps and the internet to learn and access information (46%).

However, parents also felt that smartphones came with a number of potential risks, with 83% of parents said that they felt smartphones are potentially harmful to young people. 9 in 10 parents (89%) were concerned about the potential for online bullying and abuse. 87% were concerned that their children might access harmful content online and 85% that their children might develop unrealistic expectations about body image or lifestyle.

69% of parents felt that limiting children's access to smartphones would make life easier for them.

The negative impacts of social media

9 in 10 parents (93%) were concerned about the potential harms of social media to their children, with two thirds (63%) saying they were very concerned.

95% of parents feel that social media and other technology companies should do more to protect children under 16 from harmful content, and 94% of parents agree that the companies should face tougher sanctions from the Government if children are exposed to harmful content.

Currently, children are typically allowed to sign-up for social media accounts from age 13. 80% of parents feel this age limit is too low and should be raised, with only 2% of parents feeling that it's too high and should be lowered.

Primary vs Secondary

A number of differences were observed between parents of primary school and secondary school children. It was relatively uncommon for children in primary school to currently have smartphones (4% amongst children aged 4 – 7 and 24% amongst children aged 8 – 11) compared to widespread ownership amongst children at secondary

school (93% amongst children aged 12 – 15 and 98% amongst children aged 16 – 18).

Parents of primary school children were typically much more concerned than parents of secondary school children about the potential risks of smartphones; such as sending or receiving inappropriate images (94% vs 73%), spending too much time on social media (93% vs 72%) and encountering extreme views and opinions (90% vs 65%).

Parents of primary school children were also less likely than parents of secondary school children to consider potential benefits to their child owning a smartphone as being important, such as keeping in contact with friends outside school (29% vs 61%) and using apps and the internet for learning and information (34% vs 61%).

94% of parents with primary school children feel that smartphones are harmful to children and young people compared to 71% of parents with secondary school children. 98% of parents of primary school children and 87% of parents of secondary school children felt that social media was harmful to children and young people.

Primary school parents were also much more in favour of additional restrictions on social media than secondary school parents, such as raising the minimum age limit (90% vs 67%).



Methodology

This research was conducted online by Parentkind between 19th February - 4th March 2024 amongst 2,496 parents in England with at least one child aged 4-18. The figures have been weighted by public polling agency We Think to be representative of all parents in England based on the age and gender profile of children.

Figures quoted in these results may not appear to total to 100% due to rounding to the nearest whole number.



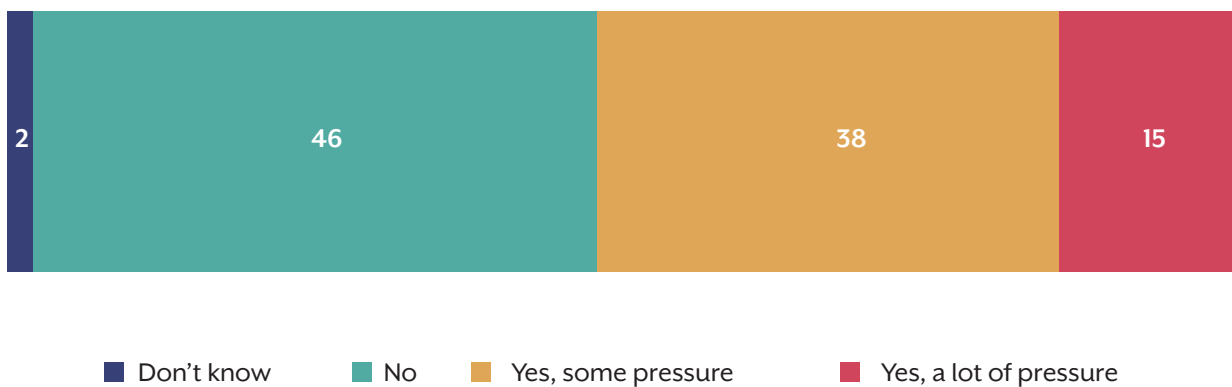
Contact us:

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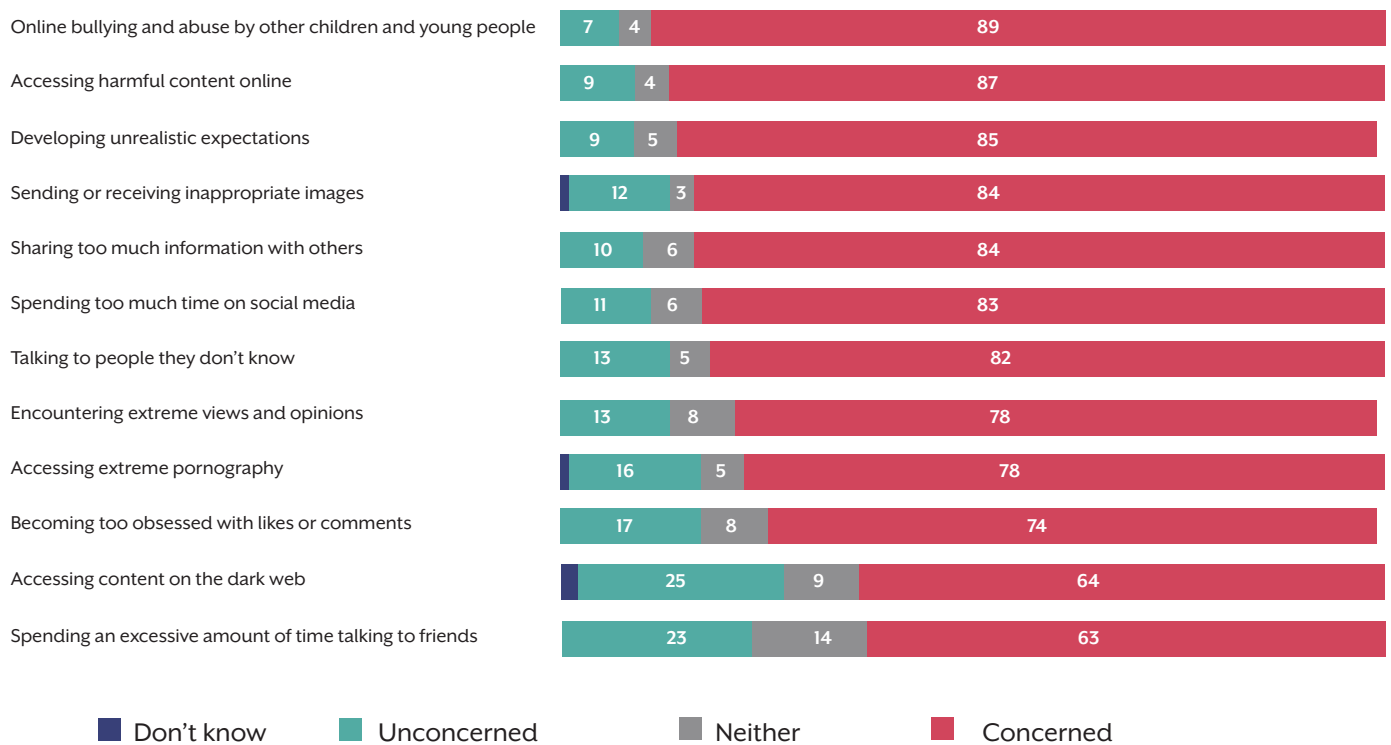


Results

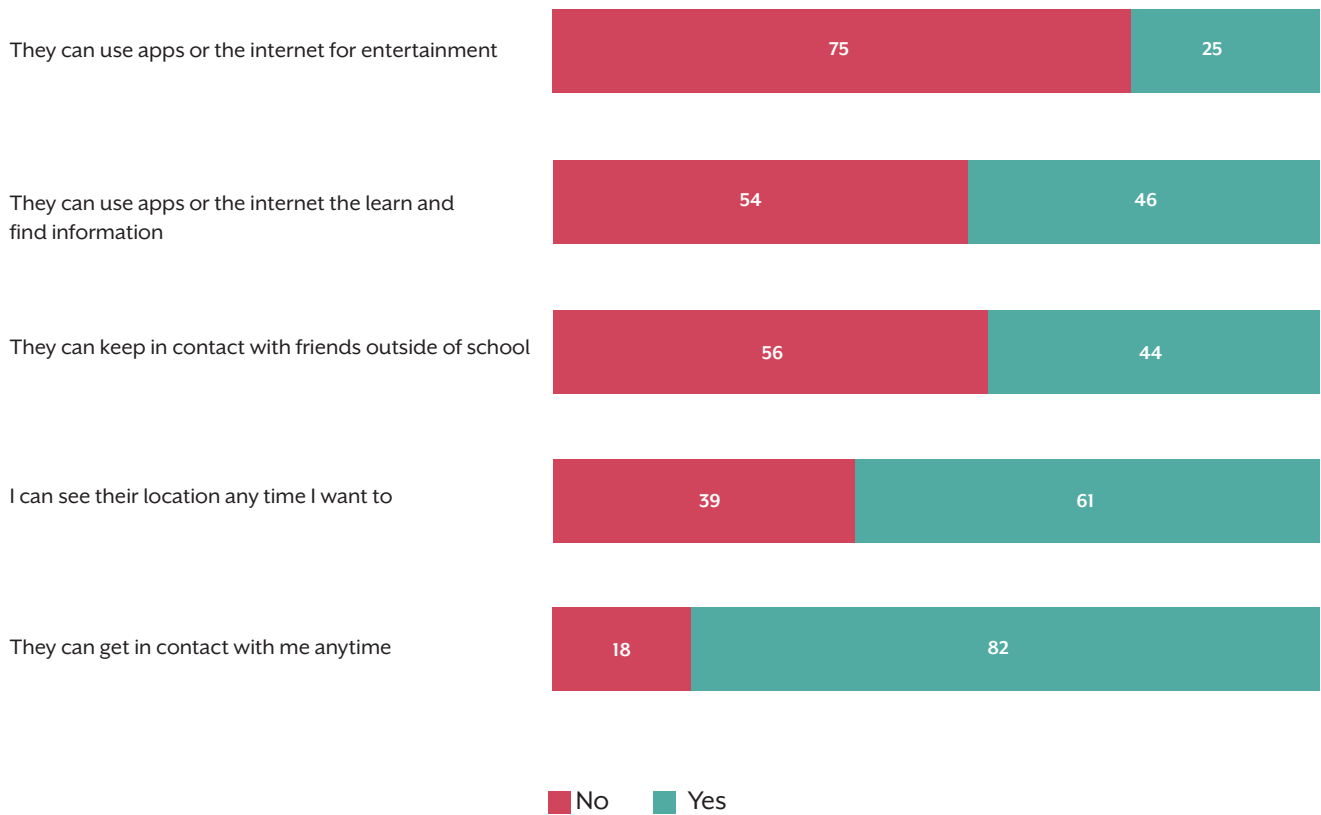
Have you felt any pressure to give your child a smartphone at a younger age than you would prefer?



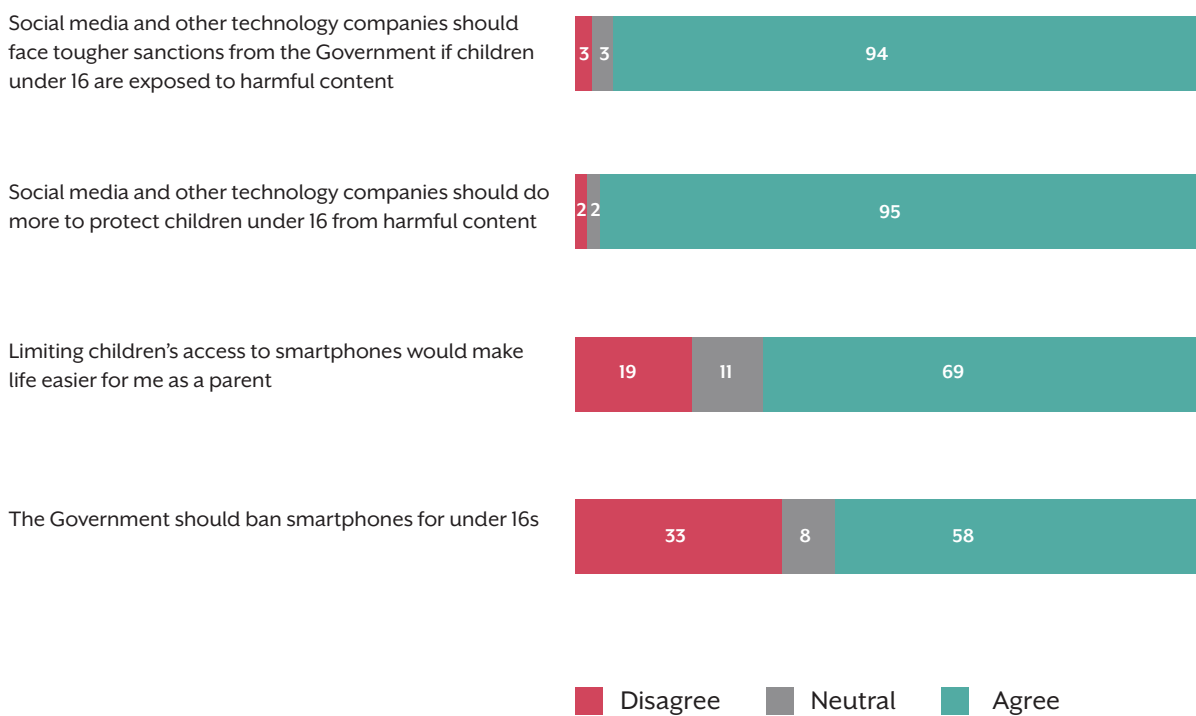
To what extent are you concerned about the following potential risks from your child using a smartphone?



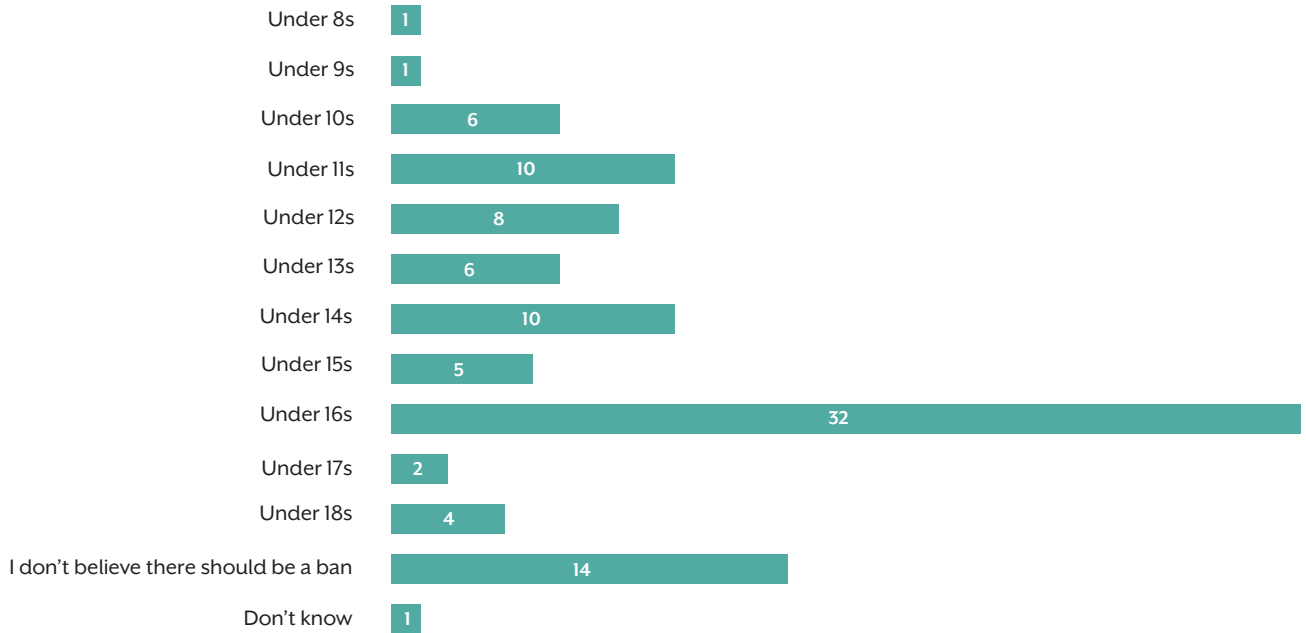
How important do you consider the following potential benefits of your child having a smartphone



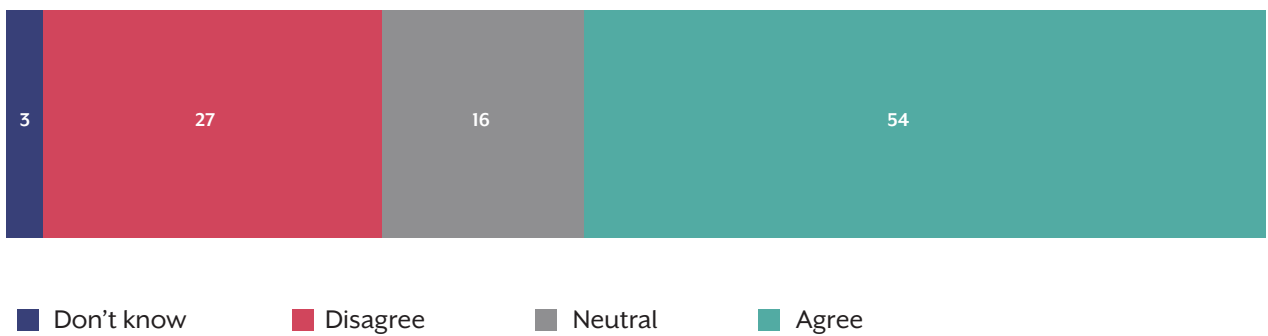
To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements



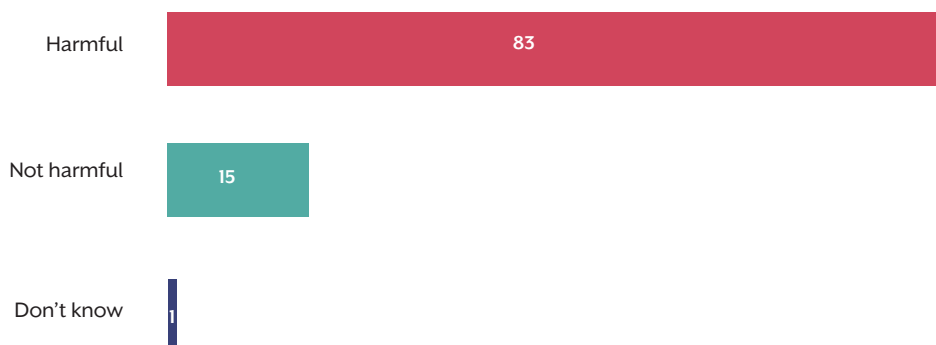
If the Government was to introduce a ban on smartphones, what age group do you feel that should apply to?



To what extent do you agree that you have the right amount of support (including parental controls on phones) to manage how your child uses their smartphone?



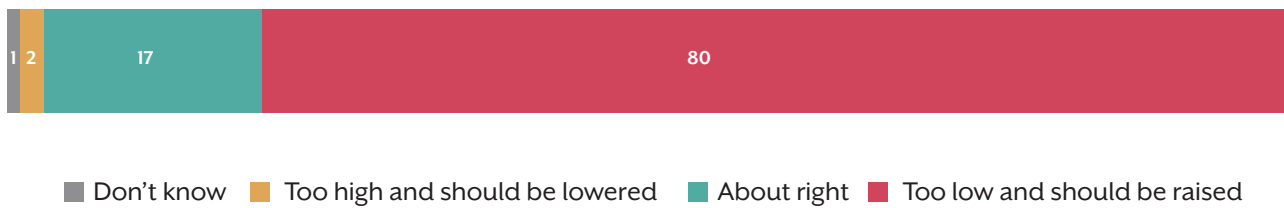
To what extent do you feel that smartphones are harmful to children and young people?



To what extent do you feel that social media is harmful to children and young people?



Currently, children are typically allowed to sign-up for social media accounts from aged 13. Do you think this age limit is:



■ Don't know ■ Too high and should be lowered ■ About right ■ Too low and should be raised

Smartphone ownership and attitude towards a smartphone ban by age of child

Age group of child	% of children that have smartphones	% that support a ban for under 16s	Support a ban (primary vs secondary)	% that oppose a ban for under 16s	Oppose a ban (primary vs secondary)
Age 4-7	4%	79%	77%	13%	16%
Age 8-11	24%	75%		18%	
Age 12-15	93%	39%	36%	53%	54%
Age 16-18	98%	32%		56%	

Attitude towards a smartphone ban by smartphone ownership and school phase

	Has smartphone		No smartphone	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Support ban	41%	33%	84%	87%
Oppose ban	49%	56%	10%	13%