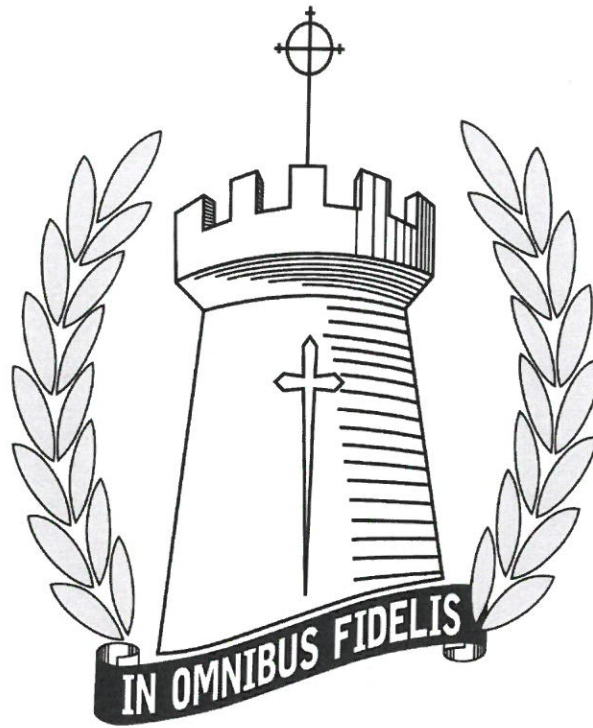


St Damian's R.C. Science College



Parental Information

6 Things to consider before buying your child a Mobile Phone

Top 6 things to consider before buying your child, a Mobile Phone.

As parents, we want our children to be children for as long as possible. But too quickly, they grow up and with technology in 2017 the transition to puberty and adulthood seems even faster than ever. The average child gets their first smartphone at 10 years old! That's a young age to have so much responsibility.

Ten years old may seem too young to you—but even if your child doesn't have a phone, their friends will. It's up to you as a parent to make sure you think about how this will affect your child and in what way you will guide them to be digitally responsible. The decision to buy your child a smartphone is not to be taken lightly and there are many things you need to consider before coming to a decision.

1. Do they know the BIG NOs?

Children are bound to make mistakes and get into trouble regardless of whether they have been warned. Still, it is so important to have conversations about what they can and cannot do online.

What are some of the most common BIG NOs instilled in children?

DO NOT talk to strangers online. Whether it's on social media or a gaming app, kids are too young and vulnerable to let any strangers into their life—without you vetting!

DO NOT share private details such as your home address or passwords, even if it's a friend they trust.

DO NOT break or lose your phone. Carelessness is a definite sign they are not ready for this responsibility!

2. Have an agreed mobile phone contract?

A contract is one of the most powerful tools you can use to have your child follow the rules that come with getting their own phone. With a phone contract, children are more likely to follow the rules because they will be made liable if they break one of them.

A phone contract should be written and agreed upon before purchasing them a phone. Ask yourself what your priorities are for your child. Priorities will differ for each parent but one example of a good rule is to set a phone etiquette during mealtimes. You could also set a time at the end of the day when your child hands over their phone so they won't stay up late browsing online.

3. Do they know about online etiquette?

No parent wants to see their child suffer from online bullying but we should not be proud of our children being cyberbullies either. Before giving our kids a phone, they should know how to conduct themselves online. This means standing up for someone being bullied or at least, reporting the cyberbullies to an adult. It means they know that sending inappropriate images is a huge no that comes with severe consequences and that meeting someone from the online world in person is dangerous.

4. Have they agreed to being monitored?

Make it clear that monitoring software is not for you to spy on them but to protect them from online dangers. 11.4 years is the average age of 39% of kids using social media, even though social media giants such as Instagram require users to be 13 years of age or older.

Besides monitoring from online dangers, a parental control app will assist you in keeping tabs on the rules you have imposed on your children which will, in turn, see your child make a greater effort to follow the phone contract you have drawn up.

5. Is the phone child proof?

Have you set the appropriate age of your child on their phones' app store? Have you switched their browsers to private? Monitoring apps are helpful in keeping you aware of your Childs' online footprints.

6. Is your child ready for the responsibility?

It is difficult to say at what age a child is ready for a mobile phone because one child could be ready at 10 while another could use a couple more years. We will always have reservations about giving our child a phone but we can determine whether they are ready for the responsibility through how they react to the contract. Ask yourself, has your child grasped the meaning behind online etiquette and online dangers?

Preparing our kids for the online world is more than telling them how to use the internet. We need to show our kids that the online world is not just a place to gossip or gain likes. It is where they can be inspired and learn to be creative. It is the world that will teach them about infinite possibilities and a place that will get them to dream big. After all these questions, don't just hand your child their phone but transition with them into the online world by sitting with them and showing them how incredible the online world can be.