

RESEARCH BASED, SMARTPHONE FREE, TRANSITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

Our school recommends delaying smartphones and social media for your child as they move through school. As you may be aware, recent research shows a significant negative effects, and while governments all over the world are starting to act, we as educators must be proactive and help guide our school community.

This document briefly highlights why we advise this delay and share some beneficial alternatives.

For more information, visit www.unpluggedrebelsnz.com, a New Zealand charitable trust raising awareness and support.

*"Research shows that this is not something we can argue back and forth about, saying it's just a correlation. There is now substantial evidence that social media is causing anxiety and depression." - Nathan Wallis
Neuroscientist Educator*

Sexual Content & Behaviour



- Exposing children to sexual & offensive content
- Pressuring both boys and girls into sending sexual images of themselves
- Exposing children to sexual abuse & grooming

Physical Health



- Damaging children's eyes
- Contributing to obesity in children
- Preventing children playing outside
- Damaging development of children's spine
- Stopping kids getting enough sleep

Focus & Brain Change



- Addictive
- Reducing children's academic performance
- Creating structural changes to children's brains

Mental & Emotional



- Responsible for the huge increase in cyberbullying
- Increasing depression and anxiety in children
- Increasing loneliness in children
- Making children more likely to self-harm

Social Development



- Hinder development of social skills and relationships
- Damaging for family relationships

Our tamariki and rangatahi are growing up in a digital world, where technology offers many benefits. However, adult smartphones are often given to them too soon, rather than being a final option.

We support a gradual introduction to technology and offer some alternative options for consideration.

Every child and family is unique. We hope this information helps strengthen our school community.



DeMobile Phone - AGM M6

In order to buy with confidence, Tone Down Tech has acquired safety and compliance testing for the AGM M6. TDT is the only supplier of the AGM M6 in NZ to have a certified NZ/Australian power adaptor.



Flip phone - AGM M8

- The best rugged flip phone on the market.
- Perfect first phone for kids
- Drop, dust and water proof
- FM radio and torch.
- Basic camera.
- No internet.



Nokia 5710

Other notable specs of the Nokia 5710 are:

- 0.3MP back camera
- 3.5mm audio connector
- Wi-Fi
- Bluetooth v5.0
- microUSB v2.0



Nokia 2660

The Nokia 2660 Flip phone from Personal Digital displays the incoming caller ID when the lid is closed. This phone features very loud speakers, which makes it a good phone for listening to music, talking on the phone



Nokia 3210

Paying homage to the original Nokia 3210 design, Nokia Icon has been rebuilt from ground up. Long battery life, back camera and Bluetooth connectivity.



Kid-Safe Smartphone – Galaxy A15 5G

Designed in collaboration with Samsung, the Kid-Safe Smartphone is perfect for providing your child with a remarkably safe and clean digital experience.



Bounce Garmin Jr

Two-way text and voice messaging via the Garmin Jr.™ app on your compatible smartphone. Real-time location tracking, tracks steps, sleep, activity and more.

UNPLUGGED REBELS NZ

Unplugged Rebels NZ is a "join us" approach. We do not state an age, but do provide the evidence and networks to bring awareness to the dangers.

We aim to bring awareness and support to whanau and educators:

- Interviewing experts in the field and high profile people
- Media attention and reporting on the movement
- Provide a national platform (website) which educates, connects and then empowers parents and educators
- Use social media (FB, LinkedIn, Instagram) to reach new parents and inform existing members
- Provide support to regional rebels, ambassador coordinator and ambassadors.

REGIONAL REBEL

A region could be broken up further (eg. Auckland)

Every Regional Rebel or rebel team will be different in their approach, just as every community is different. (Please note that ultimately you want to recruit as many ambassadors as possible to help spread the message within their communities. Because you can't be everywhere and doing everything)

This is how we see the role, but you make it work for you:

- Regional Rebels are the local spokesperson
- Contacting and speaking to local media
- Contacting and speaking to local MP's
- Contacting and speaking to local schools, getting the message into the news letters, PTA meetings, school fairs and filtering down.
- Speaking or helping to connect schools and speakers for presentations
- Using the WhatsApp group as a platform to organise and promote local events, promote the mahi and successes of local initiatives
- We want our Regional rebels to post global media around the subject on the Unplugged Rebels NZ facebook page, and local information on their WhatsApp group.
- The Ambassador package (which is being whipped up now) will be a helpful resource to you. If you have any resources which you think would be helpful to others please share that with us. If you think we need to create another resource please let us know.
- It's also important to direct as many parents and educators onto the website to access more information and resources.

UNPLUGGED REBELS NZ

AMBASSADOR COORDINATOR

Our goal is to have an ambassador in every school across NZ

We see the Ambassador Coordinator role is training and supporting the ambassadors who are on the ground. This is through:

- Monthly zoom group sessions
- Create the ambassador training package
- Create PPT presentation slides and notes for Regional Rebels and Ambassadors to be able to give a UR's presentation

AMBASSADORS

Every Ambassador will be different in their approach, as we all have different strengths, and capacity. However with the Ambassador pack and support they have access to a range of resources to help them get the message out further.

This is how we see the ambassador role:

- Reaching out to school principal/ teachers/ PTA/ parents/ local MP etc.
- Organising a school/ community talk
- Putting posters/ flyers up at school/ community spaces
- Chatting to other parents
- Create a WhatsApp for your school/ share information with existing school WhatsApp groups

GLOBAL MOVEMENT

A movement demanding more from governments and tech companies as we see accelerating rates of anxiety and depression in our young people and compelling causal evidence linking it to smartphones and social media.

USA

Wait Until 8th is a movement based around parents taking a pledge to not give their child a smartphone until the age of 13-14. The pledge becomes live once 10 families from the same grade have taken the pledge.

UK

Delay smartphones UK is a pledge system which is active immediately and the list of schools is displayed.

Phone free childhood is a 'join us' idea but not a pledge, and has an extensive WhatsApp network of sharing information at a national and local level.

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Unplugged Rebels NZ is a "join us" approach. We do not state an age, but do provide the evidence and networks to bring awareness to the dangers.

We aim to bring awareness to whanau and educators through:

- Interviewing experts in the field and high profile people
- Media attention and reporting on the movement
- Provide a national platform (website) which educates, connects and then empowers parents and educators
- Use social media (FB, Instagram) to reach new parents and inform existing members
- Provide support to regional rebels and local ambassadors.

TE IKA-A-MĀUI NORTH ISLAND

Nine local government regions cover the North Island and its adjacent islands.

TE WAIPOUNAMU SOUTH ISLAND

Seven local government regions cover the South Island and its adjacent islands.

REGIONAL REBEL

A region could be broken up further (eg. Auckland)

Every Regional Rebel will be different in their approach, just as every community is different. This is how we see a regional role looking:

- Regional Rebels are the local spokesperson
- Contacting and speaking to local media
- Contacting and speaking to local schools, getting the message into the news letters and filtering down.
- Using the facebook group as a platform to organise and promote local events, promote the mahi and successes of local initiatives, and of the regional rebel themselves eg. Today UR's reached out to Sunny Side Primary" and tag @Sunnysideprimary.

AMBASSADORS

"Our goal is to have an ambassador in every school across NZ"

Every Ambassador will be different in their approach, as we all have different strengths, and capacity. This is how we see the ambassador role:

- Reaching out to school principle/ teachers/ PTA/ parents/ local MP etc.
- Organising a school/ community talk
- Putting posters/ flyers up at school/ community spaces
- Chatting to other parents

Regional Rebels are the local spokesperson.

- Contacting and speaking to local media
- The facebook group is to be used as a platform to organise and promote local events (Anything from informal gatherings of parents, to expert speakers with ticketed events)
- The facebook group is also used to promote the mahi and successes of the regional rebels, eg. Today UR's reached out to Sunny Side Primary" and tag @Sunnysideprimary
- Spread the message and encourage people to join us as either an ambassador or



“Our goal is to have an ambassador in every school across NZ”

The ambassador pack/ training will prepare and continue to support parents and educators to be the spokes person within that school, and community. They will be encouraged to join the regional FB group to broaden their network of like minded parents.

EVIDENCE

At Unplugged Rebels NZ we have been inspired by the incredible mahi of the UK group Delaysmartphones.org.uk and have found many references through them which we hope you find helpful. Please note: This is a global problem and these are global references.



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Focus & brain change

- Addictive
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Mental & emotional health

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Social development

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- Damaging for family relationships

EVIDENCE FOR SEXUAL CONTENT & BEHAVIOUR

WWW.UNPLUGGEDREBELSNZ.COM

18+

UNPLUGGED
REBELS
NZ

...exposing children to sexual & offensive content

- **90% of girls and 50% of boys** say they and their peers are sent explicit pictures or videos of things they **do not want to see**

- **36%** of children aged 8-17 said they had seen something 'worrying or nasty' online in the past 12 months

...pressuring girls into sending sexual images of themselves

- **80% of teenage girls** are being put under pressure to provide sexual images of themselves

...exposing children to sexual abuse & grooming

- **51%** of 11 to 13 year olds say they have seen pornography online

- **1,058%** increase since 2019 of webpages showing **sexual abuse of 7-10 year old children**

- **Girls are commonly contacted by multiple boys a night** asking for 'nudes' (naked/ semi-naked images)

EVIDENCE FOR PHYSICAL HEALTH



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REBELS
NZ

...contributing to obesity
in children

- 9 hrs/day average screen time in kids with a smartphone

...damaging development of
children's spine

- Studies of young, healthy individuals show habitual use of smartphones causes musculoskeletal problems.

Paediatricians, chiropractors and physiotherapists are warning of "text neck syndrome"

43% higher risk of obesity for those using smartphones for 5+ hrs/day

...preventing children playing outside

- Children spend twice as long looking at screens as playing outside

...stopping kids getting enough sleep

- 57% more teens sleep deprived in 2015 than in 1991

- When they should be sleeping 80% of teens are using smartphones

...damaging children's eyes

- Children's myopia risk (shortsightedness) is linked to smartphone use

EVIDENCE FOR FOCUS & BRAIN CHANGE



WWW.UNPLUGGEDREBELSNZ.COM

...addictive

- 46% of teens say they use their phones "almost constantly"

...preventing children playing outside

- ...creating structural changes to children's brains

...reducing children's academic performance

- Smartphones reduce memory and recall accuracy, even when not in use

- Children who spend 5-7 hrs/day on a digital device are 49 points (equivalent of two school years) behind children who are on a screen <1hr/day

- MRI scans of young children shows screen time reduces the size of the brain areas responsible for visual processing, empathy, attention, complex memory and early reading skills

EVIDENCE FOR MENTAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH



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REBELS
NZ

...increasing depression and anxiety in children

- A 2023 study of 27,969 18-24 year olds found that mental health outcomes were significantly better the older the young person was when they got a smartphone.

- Depression, feelings of aggression, suicidal thoughts, low self-confidence, poor self-image, detachment and weak relationships **increase for every year younger a child is given a smartphone** – even in those with no traumatic or adverse childhood experience.

...making children more likely to self-harm

- **194% increase** in emergency department visits for **self-harm** by 10-14 year olds girls (94% for boys)

The first generation of children who were given smartphones in primary school are now adults.

We now know **for every year younger** they were given smartphones by their parents, **the worse their mental health is today.**

...increasing loneliness in children

- Loneliness has doubled in children since 2012
- School loneliness is highest where access to smartphones and internet use is high

- Up to **30% of teenage girls report purposefully hurting themselves without wanting to die in the last year**

EVIDENCE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



WWW.UNPLUGGEDREBELSNZ.COM

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REBELS
NZ

Children with smartphones spend longer in a virtual world **without human interaction**

- The quality of family relationships and friendships **decreases for every year** younger a child is given a smartphone

- **Hinder development** of social skills and relationships

- **Social Self** – how we see ourselves and relate to others – shows the most significant and steepest improvement with older age

- Damaging for **family relationships**

The **daily average** of 5-8 hours adds up to **1,000 to 2,000 hours a year** that would otherwise be spent in face-to-face social interactions, learning and mastering these important skills and building strong relationships