# Aureus School leads call to rethink children’s digital freedom and safety



Aureus School in Didcot recently hosted an event titled 'Offline and Safe: Rethinking Children’s Digital Freedom,' which aimed to address the significant risks associated with unregulated internet and smartphone access among children. The event, organised in partnership with the campaign group Smartphone Free Childhood, highlighted the need for a broader and more comprehensive approach to protecting young people in today’s digital environment, extending beyond the common practice of banning mobile phones within school premises.

At the heart of Aureus School’s campaign is headteacher Kirsty Rogers, who has been a vocal advocate for strengthening digital safety measures for children. Under her leadership, the school has introduced a strict mobile phone policy that requires pupils to lock their devices in designated pouches during school hours, effectively preventing their use during the day. Despite this, Ms Rogers emphasised that such policies alone are insufficient to safeguard children from the wider risks of internet exposure outside school hours.

Speaking about the broader digital safety concerns, Ms Rogers said: "This isn’t enough. Children are having unrestricted access to the internet, and we sometimes forget this is a two-way thing. You might feel your child is ready for the internet – but are you ready for the internet to have access to them?" Her remarks drew attention to the challenges parents and guardians face in managing children’s online experiences, highlighting the reciprocal nature of internet interaction.

Joining Ms Rogers on stage was Will Orr-Ewing, a representative from Smartphone Free Childhood. He presented a range of statistics emphasising the mental health risks, privacy issues, and developmental challenges linked to early mobile phone ownership and usage among children. Together, they recommended that the age at which children begin to own and use smartphones be delayed until at least 14 years old to mitigate these risks.

For families where children already have access to smartphones, both Ms Rogers and Mr Orr-Ewing offered advice on implementing effective restrictions and strategies to reduce screen time, aiming to promote healthier digital habits.

The event at Aureus School reflects growing concerns about children’s interaction with digital technology and the search for practical solutions to ensure their well-being in an increasingly connected world.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.aureusschool.org/228/latest-news/article/270/offline-safe-rethinking-childrens-digital-freedom> - Confirms the event 'Offline & Safe: Rethinking Children’s Digital Freedom' was hosted by Aureus School in partnership with Smartphone Free Childhood, addressing risks of unregulated internet/smartphone access.
2. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/offline-safe-rethinking-childrens-digital-freedom-tickets-1290416563679> - Provides event details, agenda, and speakers (including Kirsty Rogers and Will Orr-Ewing), corroborating the focus on broader digital safety beyond school phone bans.
3. <https://www.instagram.com/aureus_school_/p/DIv9jVfOK0H/> - Aureus School's social media post about the event, confirming its emphasis on parental education and school leader engagement regarding children's digital risks.
4. <https://www.aureusschool.org> - Aureus School's official website mentioning the event and Kirsty Rogers' leadership in promoting digital safety, aligning with her advocacy for stricter policies.
5. <https://www.aureusschool.org/228/latest-news/article/270/offline-safe-rethinking-childrens-digital-freedom> - Reiterates Kirsty Rogers' role in the event and the school's commitment to addressing digital risks, including discussions about delayed smartphone ownership until age 14.
6. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/offline-safe-rethinking-childrens-digital-freedom-tickets-1290416563679> - Event listing confirms Will Orr-Ewing's participation as Smartphone Free Childhood ambassador, supporting claims about mental health risks and developmental challenges discussed.
7. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25114712.aureus-school-discusses-risks-child-smartphone-use/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data