

Dear Tim,

Re. IT'S OK TO BE OFF-GRID – IF YOU'RE A KID!

I was heartened by your open letter to Sadiq Khan addressing the London Underground advertising campaign promoting smartphone use. Your succinctly articulated concerns about the impact on children's well-being and the digital norms shaping society resonate with many, including myself and a group of concerned individuals and parents advocating for reduced screen time for children.

Raising Awareness of Digital Harm

Numerous studies show that children's attention and behaviour improve when they reduce smartphone usage. Research reveals that excessive screen exposure can neurologically harm young brains, much like addiction.¹⁻³ Notably, Nicholas Kardaras highlights that brain imaging studies show screen time's detrimental effects on developing brains, and was shocked to discover that *"...recent brain imaging studies conclusively show that excessive screen exposure can neurologically damage a young person's developing brain in the same way that drug addiction can."*⁴

Benefits of Screen-Free Education

- Studies in the media, including a Channel 4 documentary, show that children's academic performance and emotional health improve after a break from smart devices.⁵
- Dr. Rangan Chatterjee's experiment with Year 8 students found improved sleep, reduced anxiety and stronger social connections after 3 weeks without screens.^{6,7}
- Many countries, including France and Israel, have taken steps to limit smartphone use for children, highlighting the global recognition of the issue.^{8,9}

Another little-known concern about Wi-Fi and smart technologies

Are you aware of a further hazard associated with mobile phones? Radiofrequency radiation (RFR), the microwave frequencies that are emitted by Wi-Fi, mobile phones, and smart devices, has been found to be harmful, **notably, especially to children, who are more vulnerable because their brains are not yet protected by a full thickness mature skull.**^{10, 11}

- Research shows that RFR can damage DNA, affect brain function, and contribute to mental health issues like anxiety and depression.¹²⁻¹⁴
- Psychologist Jean Twenge links the rise of Wi-Fi technology with increased anxiety, loneliness, and self-harm among teens. She states: *"And it's not just symptoms that rose, but also behaviors...including emergency room visits for self-harm, for suicide attempts and completed suicides."*¹⁵

Link Between Technology and ADHD/Autism

There is a growing concern about the increase in children diagnosed with ADHD and autism. Studies suggest that electromagnetic fields (EMF) from wireless technology deplete essential brain chemicals, exacerbating these conditions. Prof. Klaus Buchner's research shows that RFR affects mental concentration and aggravates the sympathetic nervous system.

Balanced Technology Use

We are not opposed to technology but advocate for its mindful and safe use, particularly among children. We support initiatives such as eye-to-eye and screen-free interactions, as well as practices that protect children's health in the digital age. We applaud your brilliant poster: **IT'S OK TO BE OFF-GRID – IF YOU'RE A KID!** and would be delighted to watch and promote the full version of your film, *Super Connected*. We strongly recommend watching [BBC Panorama - WiFi Warning Signal - FULL VERSION \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...). This 4-minute video, which illustrates a simple experiment conducted by a group of school children and their teacher, is an eye-opener. <https://ehtrust.org/educational-materials-for-classrooms/>

Collaboration & Resources

We are working with not-for-profit organizations that promote safe technology use. Attached is a document, ***BE SUPERSMART: Simple Steps to Practice Safe Tech***, which offers practical tips for safer tech use, such as using wired connections and switching off devices at night for better sleep and health.¹⁶⁻¹⁸

We also support the **International Declaration on Human Rights of Children in the Digital Age**,¹⁹ which advocates for children's rights to be:

- Free from addictive devices, platforms, and apps.
- Protected from excessive wireless radiation exposure.
- Free from commercial exploitation.

Conclusion & Promotion

We invite you to join us in raising awareness of these critical issues and share this information. As Dr. Chatterjee said, *"We're failing our children at the moment...we've allowed modern technology to creep insidiously into children's lives...we all need to come together...We need to help children change their relationship with devices."* Please see the cited references and links below for information.¹⁹⁻²³

We look forward to your feedback and would be happy to discuss the subject with you further.

Yours sincerely,

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Resources:

1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0022n0f>
2. [What happened when I made my sons and their friends go without smartphones \(thetimes.com\)](https://www.thetimes.com/uk/education/article/uks-only-screen-free-school-no-phones-no-ipads-but-top-results)
3. <https://mieuxprevenir.blogspot.com/2024/07/the-anxious-generation-how-great.html>
4. <https://www.drkardaras.com/>
5. <https://www.thetimes.com/uk/education/article/uks-only-screen-free-school-no-phones-no-ipads-but-top-results>
6. https://www.threads.net/@drchatterjee/post/C_0mNsbNjBi
7. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03gbT4-q1OQ> Smartphone Addiction: Is It Too Late To Protect Children? | Lorraine
8. [Video Release: Archbishop Makarios III Hospital, Cyprus Reduces Wi-Fi and Wireless in Pediatric and Neonatal Units - Environmental Health Trust \(ehtrust.org\)](https://ehtrust.org/video-release-archbishop-makarios-iii-hospital-cyprus-reduces-wi-fi-and-wireless-in-pediatric-and-neonatal-units)
9. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/11/sweden-says-back-to-basics-schooling-works-on-paper>
10. [Schools and Wi-Fi — Mothers for Safe Technology](https://www.mothersforsafetechnology.org/schools-and-wi-fi)
11. [Vulnerability in Children – Phire Medical](https://www.phiremedical.com/vulnerability-in-children)
12. <https://ehtrust.org/fourth-student-has-cancer-parents-demand-removal-of-cell-tower-from-ripon-school/>
13. [Powerwatch - Home](https://www.powerwatch.org/)
14. [Jenny Fry a 15-year-old schoolgirl who sadly took her own life in 2015. – Radiation Research](https://www.radiationresearch.org/jenny-fry-a-15-year-old-schoolgirl-who-sadly-took-her-own-life-in-2015)
15. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/04/25/1171773181/social-media-teens-mental-health>
16. <https://www.avaate.org/IMG/pdf/Rimbach-Study-20112.pdf>
17. [Safeguarding Children | SSITA](https://www.ssita.org/safeguarding-children)
18. https://ehtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Be-supersmart-reduce-wireless-fact-sheet_EHT-Reduce-Cell-Phone-and-Wireless-Exposure-2-Page-PDF.pdf
19. <https://www.thechildrensdeclaration.org/become-a-signatory>
20. [Health and Safety in schools: Wireless Technologies - Message from SSITA](https://www.ssita.org/health-and-safety-in-schools-wireless-technologies)
21. [Schools' guide \(wiredchild.org\)](https://www.wiredchild.org/schools-guide)
22. [Towards Better Health: Wireless technologies, non-ionizing electromagnetic fields and children: Identifying and reducing health risks \(mieuxprevenir.blogspot.com\)](https://mieuxprevenir.blogspot.com/towards-better-health-wireless-technologies-non-ionizing-electromagnetic-fields-and-children-identifying-and-reducing-health-risks)
23. [Example Risk Assessment for Schools and other workplaces \(wirelessriskassessment.org\)](https://www.wirelessriskassessment.org/example-risk-assessment-for-schools-and-other-workplaces)

