

Dear *[Head Teacher / name of relevant school contact]*

[I am/We are] the parent[s] of XXXXX in Year XX. [I/We] have some concerns about the effectiveness of online homework for our [son]/[daughter]. We would like to explain our concerns and make a related request.

The impacts of excessive screentime on children's physical and mental health have been well-documented. As a family [I/we] have chosen to limit screentime and *[I/we do not allow [my/our] [child/children] routinely to use] / [are careful to limit the use of]* devices at home.

[We are delighted that the school [has introduced / is planning to introduce] a smartphone free policy during the school day.] However we are finding that homework requiring screen access is making it more difficult for us to manage screentime at home. This is something [I/we] have been working on as a family, and as a consequence homework set on a screen feels to be at odds with our efforts to support a healthy balance.

From [my/our] perspective, screen-based homework seems to offer less learning benefit than traditional paper-based reading and writing.

In particular [my/our] experience has been: *[In your own words describe here your family's experience of the issues caused by homework being set and/or required to be completed/handed in online. These might include, for example:]*

- *[I/We] have noticed that [my/our] [son/daughter] is spending a disproportionate amount of time simply logging on and trying to locate homework across different platforms. With no centralised system, this often leads to missed tasks, a confidence knock, and unnecessary school sanctions.*
- *There seems to be no clear guidance on how long online homework should take, making it difficult to manage expectations and balance it with family life.*
- *With limited devices in the home, it can be challenging when multiple children need access, or when [I/we], as parents, need the same devices for work.*
- *We have noticed an increased tendency for our [son]/[daughter] to superficially 'Google' answers in place of learning through the process of research using primary or secondary sources, and thinking properly about a task.*
- *[I/We] find that [my/our son/daughter] is often distracted by YouTube, games, or chatting on [specify relevant platform eg. MS Teams] while on the device. This reduces focus and delays homework completion until later in the evening which can then contribute to sleep being delayed or disturbed.*
- *Some platforms use rewards and instant feedback in an attempt to keep children engaged. [I/We] have noticed our child rushing through tasks for*

rewards / points rather than engaging with the content—raising concerns about meaningful learning and preparation for GCSEs.

- Using screens for homework late in the evening is affecting our child's ability to wind down and sleep well yet we know that good sleep is critical for development and wellbeing in childhood and adolescence.
- There has been increasing friction at home over screen use. It's hard to know if [my/our] child is actually doing homework or something else online, and this uncertainty has affected trust and caused arguments.
- It's difficult for working parents or single-parent families to supervise online homework or solve tech issues, leaving children stuck or unsupported.
- In a similar way, where all homework is completed and submitted online, parents are rarely able to see a piece of their child's homework, which feels detrimental to [my/our] ability to support [my/our] child with homework.

In light of this, [I am/we are] concerned that the use of online platforms for homework – and of 1:1 devices in lessons – is not helping to prepare children for what will be expected of them in Years 10 and 11, and for their public examinations. [I/We] instinctively feel that online learning will not adequately prepare children for the handwriting demands of exams, nor does there seem to be any convincing evidence that it will aid cognition, comprehension, retention or critical thinking, all of which I/we believe will be vital for exam success.

[I/we] understand that there have been a number of studies that indicate reading from a screen encourages skimming and scanning of text whereas reading from a book promotes deeper understanding and comprehension, and that the process of handwriting, unlike typing, improves memory and retention of knowledge.

[I/We] recently read the Education Select Committee's 2024 report which raised concerns about the elusive educational benefits of EdTech platforms. That report highlighted that only 7% of EdTech companies have conducted rigorous randomised controlled trials, and only 12% have sought third-party certification.

May [I/we] ask whether you are familiar with that report and, if so, whether you have any thoughts about its worrying conclusions? [I/we] genuinely wish to understand the school's perspective on this really important topic.

[I/We] should add that on top of the wellbeing and educational concerns that [I've/we've] summarised above, [I am/we are] also concerned about widely publicised data privacy issues concerning the collection and (in some cases) loss of children's data by Edtech platforms.¹

¹ See for example:

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/oct/05/uk-secondary-schools-suffered-cyber-attack-or-breach-in-past-year> and <https://www.powerschool.com/security/sis-incident/notice-of-united-states-data-breach/>

For all of these reasons, [I/we] would like please for the time being to opt [my/our] child out of online homework tasks and [I/we] would be grateful if you could please arrange instead for [my/our child] to be allowed to complete homework in a non-digital form.

Thank you for reading and responding to my concerns, and may [I/we] please ask you to confirm receipt of [my/our] request? [I/we] would also be pleased in due course to take up any opportunity to discuss this with you in person.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]