

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025

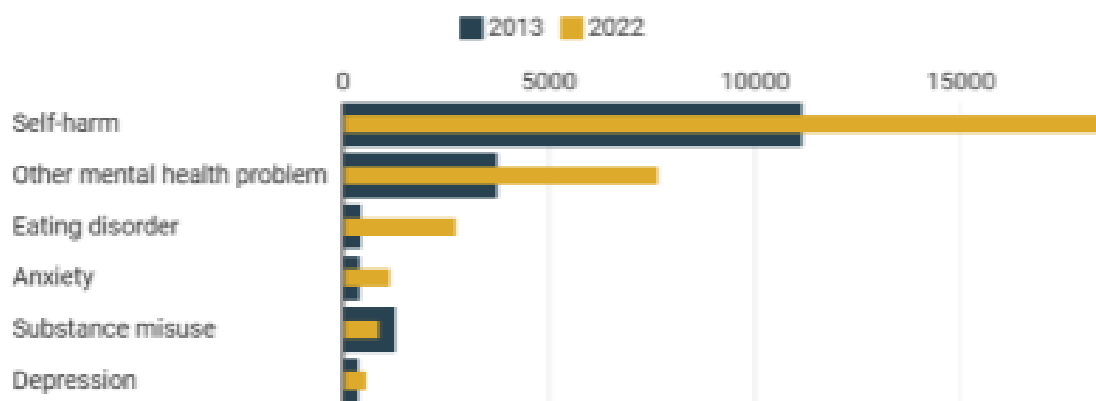
Dear Parents and Carers,

### The growth of self-harm incidents in girls mirrors the growth of the smartphone

We are aware of growing concerns—both nationally and locally—about the impact of high screen use on our young people's mental health. Research has shown that excessive time spent on devices, particularly social media, can be linked to increased risks of self-harm and other mental health challenges. For example, teens who spend five or more hours per day on their devices are significantly more likely to exhibit at least one risk factor for suicide, regardless of the content they are consuming. The amount of time spent online has been shown to be just as influential as the type of content viewed (see image below).

### Hospital admissions for self-harm soar among girls

Number of hospital admissions for girls with mental health problems, aged 5-18 by category



Year ending March

Chart: The Times and The Sunday Times • Source: UCL Research

We fully recognise that screen use is a complex, widespread issue that affects all families and communities. It is a broader social and cultural challenge that no single school—or parent—can tackle alone.

That's why all DSAT schools in Blandford are coming together to explore our own practices, engage with the latest research, and work in partnership with parents, children, and experts. Our aim is to ensure that we are all equipped with the knowledge and tools to support our children's health, wellbeing, and digital resilience.

Kindest regards



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