

Mason's story

Mason was given a new iPhone for his 11th birthday. He had wanted one for so long, and now he was getting closer to going to secondary school, his Mum finally agreed to buy him one. He downloaded as many of the free apps that his friends had told him about, and YouTube, as there was always loads of good stuff to watch on there. Over the next few weeks, he spent most evenings and weekends in his bedroom using the iPhone. Sometimes he even stayed up all night watching YouTube videos. Eventually, his Mum took the phone away from him because she said he was spending too much time on it. Mason got very angry and argued with his Mum, which was very out of character. He argued that she was always on her phone so why should it be any different for him? During the next week in school, his teacher took him to one side and asked if he was OK. The teacher said he was worried because Mason seemed tired and quite moody. Mason said he was worried about his schoolwork because he was finding it difficult to concentrate. Mason also explained he had argued with his Mum and his best friend, who accused him of being boring, and always on his phone.

Physical signs

Tired or sore eyes or blurry vision

Aching back or neck

Putting on weight or losing weight because of not eating healthily or exercising enough

Tiredness

Headache

Finding it difficult to get to sleep (the light emitted from screens can disrupt brain function and stops it from calming down)

Feeling hungry or thirsty when using the device (because you have been on it too long)

Social signs

Friends and family members mention how much time you are spending on a device

Using the device constantly during social times with your friends and family e.g. at meal times, at family time, in the car, at the cinema, on day trips out

Looking at the clock and not realising how much time has passed

Being asked to put the device away or have it taken from you

Not spending as much time with friends or family as you used to

Not enjoying or making time for other activities



Mental and emotional signs

Being moody

Getting very angry when the device runs out of power, is taken away or it can't be used (e.g. the internet drops out)

Constantly thinking about using the device or playing a game

Difficulty with school work that you used to find OK

Getting very angry or moody when told to stop

Always choosing to do activities on a screen rather than non-screen activities

