

*Blackout Education at
Kesteven & Grantham Girls' School
Parent/Guardian Information Pack
2026/27*



Parent Pack: Blackout at Your Child's School

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Link to website: <https://www.blackout-technologies.com/education>

1? Welcome & Introduction

At your child's school, we're committed to creating a calm, focused learning environment that supports both academic progress and pupil wellbeing. Smart devices play a central role in modern life, but during the school day, they can also be a source of distraction and pressure.

Blackout is a digital wellbeing tool that helps pupils stay focused by limiting access to distracting apps during school hours, while keeping essential communication (phone calls and SMS/iMessage) available for emergencies. This is not about banning technology; it's about teaching pupils to use it wisely and confidently.

In this pack, you'll find how Blackout works in practice, how it aligns with the school's phone policy, and practical ways families can support healthy digital habits at home.

"If we want young people to thrive, we must teach them how to use technology wisely rather than simply remove it."

— Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation* ?2024?

iOS ⓘApple ⓘ Permissions/ Settings = ScreenTime, Notifications ⓘVPN if enabled on the ORG ⓘ, Low Power Mode off, Background Refresh Off.
Android = Battery, Overlay, Usage, Notifications , Do not disturb, VPN for education orgs/users.

Blackout is just a data processor. We do not collect, own or process any data

2. About Blackout

Who we are

Blackout Education is a company working in partnership with schools to support healthier smart device use. Our team combines expertise in education, digital change management and EdTech. With experience both inside schools and in developing technology for them, we understand the challenges teachers, students, and parents & carers face every day.

Our mission

Blackout Education is about eliminating digital noise and distractions during the school day. Our purpose is not simply to restrict technology, but to help schools embed healthier digital habits as part of their wider culture. Blackout is designed to:

- Improve focus and reduce distractions
- Support attainment and progress through better engagement
- Embed safeguarding and promote student wellbeing

What makes us credible

- **Education understanding:** Our team includes former teaching staff and leaders with hands-on school experience.
- **Policy and research aligned:** We reflect Department for Education guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* ⓘKCSIE ⓘ, and wider research on digital wellbeing.
- **School-driven:** We work closely with students, staff, and parents & carers, using feedback loops and surveys to make improvements.

Our purpose

We want every young person to have the confidence and skills to manage smart devices well, both in school and in life. Blackout creates the space for students to focus on learning, connect meaningfully with others, and develop positive lifelong digital habits.

Data & privacy: our commitment to safety

Blackout is built on a clear principle: we do not want or need personal data.

- No personal content is ever accessed.

- No location data or browsing history is collected.
- The app only manages access to apps during the school day.
- The minimal data collected is limited to what is required for registration (such as username, email address and device type).

This means you can be confident that Blackout is a privacy-first tool, designed to support learning and wellbeing without compromising safety or security.

Blackout and education policy

Blackout supports schools in meeting key national guidance and priorities, including:

- **Behaviour in Schools** [DfE, 2022] – providing structure, consistency, and support for positive behaviour.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education** [KCSIE, 2025] – embedding digital safeguarding measures.
- **Education Endowment Foundation guidance** – reducing low-level disruption to maximise learning time.
- **Curriculum and Assessment Review for 2028** [DfE, 2025] - embedding responsible technology use and digital wellbeing into that framework.

By aligning with these frameworks, Blackout helps schools ensure that their digital wellbeing strategies are not only effective but also evidence-based and compliant with expectations set out for all schools.

Blackout Education in the media

- BBC News: *Schools adopt Blackout app to cut classroom distractions* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgdn57ve9eo>
- The Times: *Schools order pupils to use phone Blackout app* <https://www.thetimes.com/life-style/parenting/article/schools-order-pupils-phone-blackout-app-xzjdx2qz>
- ITV feature via LinkedIn: *Taking action for online activity* https://www.linkedin.com/posts/blackout-technologies-ltd_blackout-on-itv-taking-action-for-online-activity-7310708911177674753?ZGGr/

Why Blackout? Comparing different approaches

Approach	Emergency contact & Maps/ Payments (post-school)	Teaches Healthy Digital Habits	Main Issues	Why Blackout is Better
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Outright Ban / Confiscation	✗	✗	Creates conflict, teachers become “phone police”, no parent contact.	Runs automatically, avoids conflict, and still allows safe access when appropriate.
Pouches (e.g. Yondr)	✗	✗	Feels punitive, costly, no emergency access, often bypassed.	Keeps phones usable for emergencies and healthy use, while teaching responsibility.
Brick Phones	✗ (calls/text only)	✗	Unrealistic, extra cost, limited access to essential apps, pupils reject them.	Allows essential tools while blocking distractions, supporting modern life.
Blackout	☑	☑	Needs initial setup but then runs automatically.	Balanced, sustainable, and proven to reduce distractions while teaching responsible tech use.

3 Why is your child’s school using Blackout

Unrestricted smart-device use in school can undermine concentration, increase social pressure, and fragment attention. Your child’s school is using Blackout to:

- **Remove digital distractions** during the school day without locking devices away
- **Protect learning time**, supporting pupils to stay on task
- **Reduce social pressure** from constant notifications
- **Build long-term habits** and self-regulation around technology

This is **not a phone ban**. Pupils remain contactable by phone/SMS in emergencies. The goal is fairness, consistency, and a culture that helps pupils focus, connect face-to-face, and thrive.

4.

How Blackout works in school

At your child's school, Blackout will be used to help pupils stay focused during the school day and develop healthier, long-term digital habits.

Once a pupil has downloaded and set up the app, it runs quietly in the background - there is no need for pupils to manually switch anything on or off. The aim is to reduce digital distractions while keeping essential communication open in the event of an emergency.

Here's how it works in practice:

- **Blocks distractions:** All non-essential apps (such as social media, gaming and entertainment) are automatically restricted during school hours, in line with the school timetable.
- **Removes notifications:** Alerts from restricted apps will not appear during the day, helping pupils stay focused without constant interruptions.
- **Keeps pupils contactable in emergencies:** Pupils can still make and receive phone calls and SMS/iMessage if urgent contact with home is needed.
- **Activates and deactivates automatically:** Blackout switches on and off according to the school day, restoring full access to the device once lessons have finished.
- **Protects privacy:** Blackout does not track location, access personal content, or collect browsing history. It only manages access to apps during school hours, and nothing continues to run once the school day ends.
- **Supports wellbeing and focus:** By reducing unnecessary digital noise, pupils can engage more deeply in lessons, connect face-to-face with peers, and develop balanced habits around technology.

Parents and carers do not need to manage the app daily. Once installed with the required permissions, Blackout runs automatically, supporting the school's wider commitment to wellbeing, safeguarding and learning.

Working in Partnership – Reviewing and Improving Together

At your child's school, we believe that meaningful change is most successful when it's built *with* the school community, not simply *for* it.

5.

One of the strengths of Blackout is that it's not a fixed, one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, it's designed to be flexible and responsive - adapting to each school's structure, culture, and needs over time.

Blackout Education works in close partnership with every school to ensure the approach remains effective, balanced, and proportionate. This includes:

- **Regular review meetings** with school leaders to evaluate how Blackout is working in practice.
- **Feedback loops** that include pupils, parents, and staff, identifying what's going well and where adjustments may help.
- **Tailored settings and communication**, ensuring the app reflects the school's daily routines and priorities.
- **Celebrating progress**, recognising positive use and sharing insights across the school community.

This collaborative approach ensures that Blackout enhances, rather than replaces, each school's unique ethos and expectations. It also means the system continues to evolve based on real feedback and data, ensuring it supports long-term cultural change around technology use.

By working together, school staff, parents & carers, and pupils, we can create a culture where technology enhances learning, focus, and wellbeing, rather than competing with it.

School Mobile Phone Policy – What You Need to Know

Every school has its own expectations around mobile phone use during the school day. These expectations are designed to support learning, focus, wellbeing, and a calm school environment.

Blackout works in partnership with each school's mobile phone policy to make these expectations consistent and easier to follow. Together, they reduce distractions, prevent misuse, and help pupils develop responsible habits that will serve them well beyond school.

Your child's school phone policy

Your child's school will have its own specific policy outlining:

- When and where phones may be used (if at all) during the school day.

6.

- Where phones should be stored while pupils are on site.
- The process for contacting home in an emergency.
- Consequences for misuse or breaches of policy.

Blackout supports these expectations by automatically blocking distracting apps during school hours while keeping essential functions (calls and SMS/iMessage) available in emergencies. This ensures fairness, consistency, and a calmer learning environment.

The aims of this combined approach

By aligning the school's policy with Blackout, we are working towards three key goals:

1. **Consistency and fairness** – every pupil follows the same expectations, reducing conflict and confusion.
2. **Focus and wellbeing** – pupils can concentrate fully on their learning and social interactions without the constant pressure of notifications.
3. **Cultural change** – together, we are fostering a healthier, more balanced relationship with technology that prepares pupils for the future.

This approach gives clarity to staff, reassurance to families, and confidence to pupils. It helps ensure that phones, when brought to school, are used responsibly, at the right times and for the right reasons.

Supporting Healthy Phone Use at Home

Blackout supports pupils during the school day, but lasting digital balance also depends on what happens at home. Parents and carers play a vital role in shaping how young people use technology and helping them develop responsible, sustainable habits.

Every family is different, and there is no single rule that fits everyone. However, small, consistent boundaries at home can make a big difference to concentration, sleep, mood, and wellbeing.

Practical ways families can support healthy routines

- **Agree clear expectations together:** Decide when and where devices can be used, such as during homework time or before bed.
- **Create phone-free spaces:** Encourage screen-free meals, family time, or bedtime routines.
- **Use built-in parental controls:** Tools available on iPhone and Android devices allow you to set time limits, manage content, and monitor usage.
- **Model balance:** Children and teenagers often learn digital habits by example. Demonstrating healthy use as adults can have a powerful impact.

7.

- **Talk openly:** Ask questions about how your child uses their phone, what they see online, and how it makes them feel. Keep the conversation supportive rather than critical.

This isn't about removing technology, it's about helping pupils develop confidence and control in how they use it.

Useful links and tools for parents & carers

- **Apple Screen Time:** <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT208982>
- **Google Family Link:** <https://families.google.com/familylink/>
- **Internet Matters – Screen Time Tips:** <https://www.internetmatters.org>
- **Childnet – Online Safety Advice:** <https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers>

These tools work best when used alongside conversation and trust. Blackout and parental controls complement each other:

- **Blackout** manages distraction during school hours. • **Parental controls** reinforce healthy habits at home.

Together, they help create consistency and balance, showing young people that phones are valuable tools when used at the right time and for the right purpose.

Understanding Algorithms and Online Content

Why algorithms matter for your child

Social media platforms don't just show content; they decide what your child sees.

Algorithms track viewing habits and interactions, then prioritise similar content to keep users engaged for as long as possible. While this can make online experiences feel personal, it also means young people may see a narrow or distorted view of the world around them.

Over time, these systems can:

- **Distort reality**, showing only certain perspectives or extreme content.
- **Affects self-esteem** through repeated exposure to unrealistic or harmful imagery. • **Reinforce unhealthy interests**, such as dieting, aggression, or risky behaviours.

Recent studies by researchers at UCL and Ofcom have shown that within days, new social media accounts created to reflect typical teenage interests began receiving increasingly negative or extreme recommendations, often without the user realising.

8.

Building critical thinkers, not passive consumers

By helping pupils understand how algorithms work, we can encourage them to think critically about what appears on their feed.

We want young people to pause and ask:

- *Why am I seeing this?*
- *Who benefits from me engaging with it?* • *Is this content accurate, fair or healthy?*

This awareness is part of what's known as **digital literacy**, an essential life skill for navigating the modern world confidently and safely.

Blackout supports this by reducing exposure to distracting or harmful content during the school day, creating space for pupils to focus, reflect, and engage meaningfully with their peers instead.

How parents and carers can help

At home, you can build your child's digital awareness by keeping conversations open and judgment-free. Ask curious, reflective questions such as:

- "What kind of videos or posts do you see most often on your feed?"
- "Why do you think those appear more than others?"

- “Do you feel like your feed reflects what everyone else sees - or is it unique to you?”

Encouraging your child to think critically about what they see online helps them become more aware, more resilient, and more in control of their digital world.

Together, schools and families can empower pupils to become **active, responsible digital citizens**, not passive consumers of content.

9.

Digital Citizenship Certificate – Celebrating Positive Digital Habits

At your school, we believe that learning healthy digital habits is a skill worth celebrating, not just enforcing. Alongside the use of Blackout during the school day, pupils will have the opportunity to develop their understanding of digital wellbeing, online behaviour and critical thinking through a structured Digital Citizenship programme.

This is a positive, learning-focused initiative designed to help pupils:

- Reflect on how they use technology in and out of school
- Understand how digital platforms and algorithms shape their experiences
- Explore the impact of device use on wellbeing, learning and relationships
- Build practical strategies to manage their digital lives with confidence.

The Digital Citizenship Certificate

When pupils complete the programme, they will receive a Digital Citizenship Certificate. This recognises their commitment to:

- Developing balanced, healthy digital habits
- Engaging thoughtfully with the online world
- Showing leadership in shaping a positive digital culture

This certificate is intended to celebrate pupils' learning and growth, reinforcing that digital discipline is a valuable life skill that supports focus, wellbeing and positive social interactions.

How it will be introduced

- Digital Citizenship learning will be delivered through tutorial sessions, assemblies, prep work or PSHE activities.
- Pupils who complete the programme will receive their certificate as a mark of personal achievement.
- The school will highlight and celebrate pupil successes as part of its wider culture of encouragement and recognition.

By taking this education-first, positive approach, your school aims to build a community where pupils understand their digital world, take ownership of their habits and are recognised for doing so.

10.

Privacy, Permissions and Data Protection

We know that families need to feel confident about how technology is used in schools. That's why **Blackout has been designed with privacy at its core**. Its only function is to manage access to distracting apps during the school day, nothing more.

Blackout operates within strict data protection standards and is fully compliant with the **UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018**, and equivalent international data privacy laws where applicable.

What Blackout does - and does not - do

- **No personal content accessed:** Blackout does not access photos, messages, contacts, camera, or files stored on a pupil's device.
- **No location tracking:** Blackout does not record or store GPS or location data.
- **No browsing history collected:** The app does not monitor or log websites visited or search activity.
- **Minimal data collected:** Only the information required to register the device (for example, name, school email address, and device type) is collected.
- **Restricted access:** This registration data is only visible to the school's designated admin staff, who manage the system securely.
- **School-day only:** Once the school schedule ends, Blackout automatically gives full control of the device back to the pupil - or to any parental controls active at home.

Permissions and settings

To function correctly, Blackout requires certain permissions depending on the device type:

- **iOS Apple:** Screen Time, Notifications, VPN (if enabled by the school), Background App Refresh, and Low Power Mode off.
- **Android:** Battery, Overlay, Usage Access, Notifications, Do Not Disturb, and VPN for education-managed devices.

These permissions are used solely to ensure that distracting apps are restricted during the school day. They do not give Blackout access to personal data or private activity.

Our commitment

Blackout is a **privacy-first platform** designed specifically for education. It does not sell, share, or monetise data. All systems are encrypted, regularly audited, and compliant with school safeguarding and IT security policies. Families can be assured that Blackout supports learning, wellbeing, and focus, **without ever compromising safety, privacy, or trust**.

11.

Research and Evidence Behind This Approach

Why this matters

Smart devices and social media have transformed how young people learn, socialise and communicate. While technology brings opportunities for creativity and connection, constant digital stimulation can also affect focus, wellbeing, and academic progress.

A growing body of research shows that **unrestricted device use** can contribute to:

- Increased anxiety and reduced concentration
- Disrupted sleep and lower mood
- Social comparison and pressure
- Fragmented attention and reduced memory retention

Blackout's approach, reducing distractions during the school day while keeping essential communication available, is grounded in this evidence. It creates time and space for learning, face-to-face interaction, and wellbeing.

Key findings from recent research

- **200-240 notifications per day:** Young people in the UK and internationally receive hundreds of alerts daily, making sustained focus difficult [Ofcom, 2024].
- **Sleep and learning:** High levels of screen time, particularly at night, are associated with poor sleep and lower academic outcomes [World Health Organization, 2024].
- **Social media impact:** The Oxford Internet Institute found that girls aged 11-13 and boys aged 14-15 were most negatively affected by heavy social media use, showing reduced life satisfaction [OII, 2023].
- **Attention fragmentation:** Constant digital interruptions weaken deep learning and self-reflection, reducing pupils' ability to focus in class [University of Cambridge, 2025].

What education experts say

"Mobile phones... distract pupils from learning. We owe it to our children to remove distractions and enable them to be fully present and engaged." — UK Department for Education [2024]

"Adolescents with heavy digital consumption show higher rates of stress and fatigue, and lower overall wellbeing." — World Health Organization [2024]

“Girls aged 11–13 and boys aged 14–15 appear most negatively affected by social media, with lower life satisfaction reported.”

— Oxford Internet Institute 2023

Why this matters in schools

By drawing on this research, schools can help pupils:

- Focus more deeply in lessons
- Enjoy more meaningful, face-to-face social time
- Develop self-regulation and independence
- Build balanced, sustainable digital habits that support wellbeing and success

This approach is not about removing technology altogether, it’s about teaching young people how to use it wisely.

By addressing distraction and digital pressure in a supportive, evidence-led way, schools can prepare pupils not only for academic achievement, but for balanced, confident lives in an increasingly digital world.

12. Conclusion

Preparing young people for life in a digital world means more than managing devices during the school day. It’s about helping them build the judgement, discipline, and confidence to use technology well.

By introducing Blackout, your child's school is creating space for pupils to focus on learning, connect more meaningfully with others, and reflect on their relationship with technology. This approach supports academic success, emotional wellbeing, and the development of lifelong digital habits.

Change of this kind works best when schools, parents, and pupils all play a part. Together, we can:

- Create consistency between home and school
- Encourage open, non-judgemental conversations about technology
- Support young people in developing balance and self-awareness

This partnership helps pupils grow into thoughtful, capable digital citizens, ready to thrive both in school and beyond.

Thank you for your continued support in helping to make this shared vision a reality.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact your child's school or visit the **Blackout Education** website:

 www.blackout-technologies.com/education

13. FAQs & support links

What if my child doesn't have a phone?

No problem. Blackout only applies to students who bring phones to school. If your child opts not to bring a phone, they won't be affected by this policy.

What if my child needs to contact me during the school day?

They can. Phone calls and SMS/iMessage remain available for emergencies only.

Does the school monitor what students do on their devices?

No. Blackout doesn't track personal activity or store browsing history. It only manages access to apps during the school day and only collects the minimal data required for setup.

What happens if my child disables the app?

Disabling Blackout counts as a breach of school expectations. Staff are notified and will follow up according to the school's policy.

What about learning apps or homework?

Blackout only runs during school hours, so students can continue to use educational apps and complete homework after school. In class, teachers may allow supervised use of specific apps when required.

Can families use device control tools at home?

Yes. You are welcome to use built-in device tools (e.g. Screen Time, Focus Modes) alongside Blackout to reinforce healthy digital habits. Guidance on setup is included at the end of this pack.

What if something isn't working correctly?

Please report any technical issues directly to the school, or consult the support section on the Blackout Education website.

FAQs will be updated as and when needed.

Practical guidance for parents & carers**Internet Matters – Social Media Advice Hub**

Guides and tools for supporting your child's safe and healthy use of social media.

internetmatters.org/resources/social-media-advice-hub

Internet Matters – Screen Time Tips for 11-14 Year-Olds

Age-specific strategies to help balance screen time and encourage healthy routines.

internetmatters.org/resources/screen-time-age-11-14

Childnet – Social Media Help & Advice

Practical guidance on discussing the benefits and risks of social media with your child. childnet.com/parents-and-carers

Be Internet Legends – Parents [Google]

Interactive tools and conversation starters to help children be safe, confident, and kind online.

beinternetlegends.withgoogle.com/en_uk/parents

CEOP Education [NCA][CEOP]

Films, resources, and advice for talking about online safety with children and teens.

ceopeducation.co.uk/parents

TikTok Guardian's Guide

Overview of TikTok's safety tools, privacy settings, and how to manage your child's account.

parents.tiktokglobalshop.com/parents-guide

Snapchat Parent Guide [PDF]

A downloadable guide explaining Snapchat's safety features and privacy controls. snap.com/en-GB/safety/snapchat-parents

Instagram Parents' Guide

Tips for setting privacy controls and keeping your child's Instagram use safe and positive.

about.instagram.com/community/parents

Meta Child Safety Actions

Information on Meta's policies and initiatives to keep young people safe across Facebook and Instagram.

about.meta.com/actions/child-safety

Report Harmful Content

A direct way to report harmful or unsafe online material to the UK Safer Internet Centre.

reportharmfulcontent.com

Reports & research

“The impact of smartphones and social media on children” UK Parliament Commons Library [May 2024]

National data on children’s online habits and government action to reduce harm.

researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP9870/CBP9870.pdf

Ofcom’s “A window into young children’s online worlds” [April 2024]

Research on young children’s use of TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp, and associated risks.

ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/childrens/children-2024

UK Parliament: Screen time: impacts on education and wellbeing [May 2024] Examines how different

types of social media use affect wellbeing, and risks like violent content and misinformation.

committees.parliament.uk/work/8407/screen-time

Ofcom: Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2025 [May 2025] Annual overview of

children’s media habits, attitudes, and how families manage online use. [ofcom.org.uk/research-and-](https://ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/childrens/parents-children-2025)

[data/media-literacy-research/childrens/parents-children-2025](https://ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/childrens/parents-children-2025)

Ofcom: Children’s Media Lives 2025 [May 2025]

Long-term qualitative study of UK children’s media use, attitudes, and behaviours. [ofcom.org.uk/research-](https://ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/childrens/medialives-2025)

[and-data/media-literacy-research/childrens/medialives-2025](https://ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/childrens/medialives-2025)

University of Cambridge: Social Media Use Among Adolescents with Mental Health

Conditions [2025]

Shows how teens with anxiety and depression use social media differently and experience stronger negative effects.

cam.ac.uk/research/social-media-adolescents-mental-health-2025

WHO [Teens, Screens and Mental Health] [Sept 2024]

Finds 11% of adolescents show addictive social media use patterns, with girls most affected.

who.int/publications/i/item/9789240095013

Parental Controls

Why combine Blackout with parental controls?

Evidence from Blackout pilots in schools has shown that the most effective results come when Blackout and parental controls are used together.

- **Blackout** manages access to distracting apps during the school day.
- **Parental controls** help set healthy boundaries at home and outside of school hours.

Together, they create a joined-up approach to digital wellbeing. This consistency reinforces the message that phones can be useful, but must be used responsibly. It also provides a natural opportunity for conversations between parents & carers and young people about healthy device use, supporting the wider cultural change we are working towards.

How to set up parental controls

For iPhone users (Apple Screen Time)

1. Go to *Settings > Screen Time*
2. Enable Screen Time and set up Family Sharing if needed
3. Set a passcode to prevent changes
4. Configure:
 - **Downtime** (e.g. 7pm–9pm)
 - **App Limits** (e.g. social media, games)
 - **Content & Privacy Restrictions** for age-appropriate apps and media
 - **Purchasing and app installation controls**

Helpful links:

- Apple's Screen Time Guide - <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/105121> ●
[YouTube: Step-by-step tutorial](#)

For Android users (Google Family Link & Digital Wellbeing)

1. Download *Google Family Link* on both parent and child devices
2. Create or link a supervised child account
3. Set up:
 - **Screen time schedules**
 - **App download/usage limits**
 - **YouTube and web content filters**
 - **Reports on app usage**
4. Use on-device *Digital Wellbeing* tools:
 - **App timers**
 - **Focus mode**
 - **Bedtime mode**

Helpful links:

- Google Family Link Help
- [YouTube: Family Link tutorial](#)

Tip: Involve your child when setting up controls. Talking through why boundaries are in place makes them more effective and helps young people develop the self-regulation skills that last beyond school.

Blackout with parental controls:

If you already have parental controls switched on, when you child downloads Blackout (or any other app the below will occur)

