Key:

I: Interviewer

R1: Abi

R2: Caroline (mother)

R3: Sam (son)

s.l. sounds like

I: And so what I’d like you to do is to talk me through, umm, a typical weekday for your family starting from when you wake up and what time do you get up in the mornings.

R1: Umm, well, umm, me and my mum normally get up about quarter to eight, yeah?

R2: These days, that’s a recent development though, we used to get up at seven, didn’t we, before Christmas?

I: Oh right, so it’s…that’s quite a big change, isn’t it?

R1: Yeah.

I: What happened?

R1: Err, I was just, like, so tired. Umm, and forty-five minutes is quite a difference in the morning.

R2: Abi was getting exhausted so we had a conversation about it and just, umm, how to sort of factor in a bit more rest time, basically, by giving ourselves a little bit less time in the morning.

R1: Yeah.

R2: But it’s doable, so…

I: And so you…you two get up at the same time, do you?

R2: Yeah.

I: And who wakes whom up? Or do you wake up independently?

R1: We have alarms.

R2: Well, that’s changed as well, hasn’t it, because before Christmas you woke me up.

R1: Yeah.

R2: But now we’re both getting up and I’m just checking that you’re up, yeah.

R1: Yeah.

I: So what about you, Sam? What time do you get up?

R3: Eight o’clock, because I leave the house at eight-thirty.

R1: Well, normally someone calls him, don’t they, to wake him up.

R3: Today I got up a bit earlier though, but only five minutes.

R1: It doesn’t matter though.

R2: But I mean that’s pretty recent too because I would say up until maybe October last year Sam was getting up quite early.

R1: Yes, he got up at like six and went downstairs.

R2: So he’s only just started getting up later, actually.

I: Oh wow.

R2: And I think it’s…

R3: Well, I want to get up earlier but you won’t let me get up earlier.

R1: What?

R2: Well, I think it’s best while you can to sleep as much as you can, cos if you’re tired…

R1; Yeah, definitely.

R3: And especially when I’m ill.

R2: Yeah.

I: So you were getting up at six, is that right?

R2: Sometimes.

I: What would you do?

R3: Watch the TV.

I: So you’d come down here and switch the TV on?

R3: Yeah.

I: All on your own?

R3: Yeah.

I: And would you just watch TV or did you get yourself anything to eat or drink or…?

R3: Umm, my mum makes my breakfast.

I: Right. Okay. So what’s…what’s the first thing you do when you…after…after you’ve woken up?

R3: Err, I probably get dressed first.

R1: Yeah, get dressed.

I: Okay.

R2: I make breakfast.

I: Right, okay, that’s the first thing you do.

R2: Yes, I come down and empty the dishwasher and make breakfast and make sure everybody’s up.

I: Right. And, umm, sort of when and where do people eat breakfast then?

R1: I eat it when I’m getting my shoes on and brushing my hair.

R2: Standing up (Laughs).

R1: Yeah.

R3: I eat it at the table.

I: At that table there?

R3: Yeah.

I: Okay, and what about you?

R2: I eat it like Abi, on the hoof, really.

I: And what do you have for breakfast?

R3: I have cereal.

R1: It depends what I got at the supermarket, really.

R2: I have those breakfast biscuits.

I: Oh, right, okay.

R2: I’m not much of a breakfast person but I find those are quite good.

I: Okay, umm, and do you…do you have a kind of like bathroom schedule? Do you fight over who gets in the bathroom when?

R1: No, cos I…I wash in the evening so I just have to brush my teeth in the morning so it takes a couple of minutes.

R2: They both shower and stuff in the evening so it’s me, I get a shower in the morning.

R1: Yeah.

I: Oh right, okay. And you’ve worked that out that that’s the best way to do things?

R2: It’s just how it happened, really.

R1: Yeah, it just happened.

R2: Yeah.

I: And so what times do each of you leave the house in the morning?

R1: Err, I leave at eight.

R3: And I leave at eight thirty.

I: Oh right, okay, so Abi, obviously you…cos you said you get up at quarter to eight, so it’s pretty quick turn-around in getting out?

R1: Yeah.

R2: But like I say, that’s only…what is that? About the last ten days.

R1: The thing is though that…

R2: It’s an experiment.

R1: Even though, like, we did that, we would just go back to sleep so…

R2: Yes.

R1; It’s not really. (Laughs).

R2: Yeah, true.

R1: Yeah.

I: What, so you used to have your alarms on for seven and you’d wake up and then you’d go back to sleep?

R2: Abi used to wake up, come…come and call me, get into my bed and then we’d both fall asleep in my bed.

R1: Cos we couldn’t do it. (Laughs).

R2: So we worked out it was a bit counterproductive, really, because actually we were both waking up at seven and then going back to sleep.

R3: Yeah, but didn’t, umm, I used to, err, go into your bed at, like, seven o’clock?

R2: Yes, but that’s longer ago now.

R1: Yeah.

R2: Yeah. Your habits have changed. You’re now the last in bed whereas you used to be the first up.

R1: Well, on weekdays.

R3: On weekends I’m the first.

I: Oh, we’ll come to weekends in a minute. Okay. So you leave the house at eight.

R1: Yes.

I: And do you always have a friend who calls for you, is that right?

R1: Yeah, my friend comes at eight.

I: And you walk to school? Okay. Okay, and you…you leave together at eight thirty?

R2: Yeah, I take him to school.

I: How long does that take?

R2: Twenty minutes.

I: Right. Okay.

R2: Up the hill. (Laughs).

I: And, umm, how long does it take you to walk to school?

R1: About twenty minutes, I think.

I: Right, right, okay. And do you…do you go to the same…do you go to the primary school that Abi went to?

R2: No.

R3: No.

I: Oh right, okay. Okay, a different one. Okay.

R2: He did but he moved in year one, so he did reception and half of year one at the same school and then he moved to this one.

I: Right.

R1: Which is better.

I: And do you like it?

R3: Yeah.

I: And what year are you in now?

R3: Year six.

I: Right, okay, and are you going to go to Abi’s school next year?

R3: Yeah.

I: Right, okay. So then your routines will change again I imagine? Okay, so when you’ve…when you’ve walked down to school, then what? Do you come back here or…?

R2: I usually come back here and then I get the car and then I go to work.

I: Right, right. Okay. So you two are at school all day. What time does the school day end?

R1: Err, three fifteen.

I: For both of you?

R3: No, mine ends at three twenty.

I: Okay, and then…what happens at three twenty then?

R3: Well, they let you all out of school then your parents come to collect you and they take you home.

I: Is that what happens every day?

R3: Err, yeah.

I: Okay, so you’re there waiting for Sam at the school gates at three twenty?

R2: I try to be. I mean, I’m not every day, because some days I have to…some days my friend picks him up if I’ve got to be at work later.

R3: And sometimes I have clubs.

R2: And sometimes he has clubs, that’s true.

I: Is that after school clubs?

R2: Yeah.

I: In the school?

R2: Yeah.

I: Okay. Okay.

R2: So sometimes my friend drops him down if I’ve got to be at work later and Abi’s here before him so…but I try to be there still. Mostly I am. (Laughs). Sam prefers it, don’t you? Yeah.

I: And what do you do at the end of the school day then, Abi?

R1: Umm, well, I walk home, I have maths tutoring on Thursdays so I go straight there then. Umm, and if not, then I just kind of leave and walk straight home and then come in and go on the iPad.

I: Right, on your own?

R1: Umm…

I: I mean, do you ever bring friends home at that point?

R1: Umm, I’ve got a friend that comes on Tuesdays. Umm, and sometimes I walk home with someone if I just like bump into them on the way back.

I: And the…so the friend who comes on a Tuesday always comes on a Tuesday?

R1: Yeah, except for…

R2: Today.

R1: Yeah. (Laughs).

I: Oh right. You said sorry, we’re doing… And is that because she can’t get into her house or something?

R1: No, it’s just a thing.

I: Yeah?

R1: We just see each other on Tuesday.

I: Right. Okay.

R2: That’s changed too though, hasn’t it, cos Effy used to come home every day, actually.

R1: Yeah, it’s cos she’s in P and L so…

R2: Yeah.

I: What’s P and L?

R1: They’re like this…cos, like, cos the year’s split into two so you don’t really see anyone who’s in the other side except for at breaks and lunch.

I: And is that why you see her on a Tuesday or is that why you’re seeing her less?

R1: No, that’s a different person.

I: Oh right, okay. Oh right, okay, okay. So it’s a way of seeing people that you don’t get to see so much at school?

R1: Yeah.

I: Okay. And do you keep in touch with each other during the day?

R2: What, me and the children?

R3: I don’t, no, because I can’t.

R2: Not really. Sam doesn’t have a phone, although he’s telling me that everyone at school has a phone.

R3: Yes, but they have.

R2: So but I don’t think it’s necessary for him to have a phone at the moment because he doesn’t walk on his own so, umm, maybe when he starts walking on his own.

I: Oh right.

R2: Abi very occasionally will text me during the day.

R1: Sometimes I text you and say, like, I’ve forgotten my PE kit, help.

R2: Yeah, sometimes she’ll text me and say, I’m bored. Umm…

R1: You’re the only person that’s going to reply.

R2: I’m going to kill myself if I’m in this Spanish lesson for much longer. Umm, that kind of thing. I don’t text her because she shouldn’t really have a phone in class so it might get her into trouble if I texted her and it wasn’t on silent.

R1: Well, cos my phone doesn’t go on silent.

I: But you do sometimes text back?

R2: Yeah, if she’s texted.

R1: Yeah, if I text her cos then she like knows that it’s okay because I’m not in my…

I: So there’s, yeah, so there’s just…so it’s partly purposeful if you’ve forgotten something and partly just to communicate.

R1: Yeah.

R2: Misery.

R1: Yes. (Laughs).

I: Sam, does your school have a policy on mobile phones?

R3: Err, yeah, you’re not allowed them in school.

I: Right.

R3: Cos, err, if you have them in school, umm, they make you put it in a box and they close the box and you’re not allowed to get them back until the end of the day.

I: Right. Right, so even if you did have a mobile phone you wouldn’t really be using it to be in touch at all.

R3: No.

I: And so all of that putting it in a box, if you bring it, you have to put it in the box, or is it only if somebody, if a teacher notices you’re playing with it that you put it in a box?

R3: Well, I think you just have to.

I: Right, right.

R3: Even if you’re not doing anything with it.

R2: I think that’s the same, isn’t it, when you were at primary school?

R1: Yeah, you put them in an envelope and put it in the box.

R2: Yeah.

I: And then you went and got them at the end of the day?

R1: Yeah.

I: And what was the point of that? I mean, it’s kind of…I’m just wondering why would anybody take a mobile phone to school if they knew they just had to put it in for afterwards?

R1: Umm, well, yeah, it’s because, err, at primary school too, you’re so…you’re quite young still to be walking, umm, on your own so, like, if you’ve got a phone you can talk to someone if you get in trouble or something.

I: Yes, I was interested in you saying that when Sam starts walking on his own then he’ll have a mobile phone.

R2: Well, that’s when Abi had one, umm…

R1: Cos I’m…

R3: Cos she was in year six, she wasn’t as young.

R2: He’s very young for his school year.

I: Oh right.

R2: He’s the youngest in the year.

I: Oh.

R2: So, umm, so that’s a factor. Also he has a different walk.

R1: Yeah.

R2: He’s got a very…it’s quite a long walk and…and it’s…

R1: It’s more dangerous.

R2: There’s a really, really nasty road to cross as well, umm, but I mean…

R3: Is that the one that comes from both sides?

R2: Yeah.

I: Oh, lots of cars on it?

R2: But there’s a sort of parity issue in terms of what everybody else at school has and everybody else at school in year six has, umm, phones, according to Sam and also there’s a parity issue with his sister in so far as she had a phone when she was in year six, so…

I: Right.

R2: There are sort of those things to consider, so…but she had a phone when she walked on her own.

I: Right.

R2: And she had to do that earlier because he had changed school as well so…

I: Oh right, okay.

R2: Umm, so there were all those considerations so I think in my mind it’s fair to let him have a phone.

I: So which comes first, the walking on your own or the getting the mobile phone?

R2: (Laughs).

R1: I suppose the decision to walk on your own and then the phone, then the actual walking.

I: Oh right, okay.

R2: I mean, to some extent as well, the having of a mobile phone is a fantasy when you’re walking on your own because actually a lot of the time it isn’t charged or it isn’t on them and…and then even with you, when you were in year six…

R1: Yeah.

R2: You quite often didn’t have your phone charged and then of course it creates anxiety because you’re calling a phone that nobody’s picking up, so there is a sort of fantasy element about safety.

I: Oh, right.

R2: And being able to check, I think, which is interesting in itself, and that still happens now.

R1: Yeah, but I think you just have a phone that will actually hold its charge for more than an hour.

I: So how often do you use a mobile just to check in terms of safety, and is it…is it you making sure that you know where Abi is or is it, umm, Abi being able potentially to call you if she’s in trouble of some kind? How does it work?

R2: Abi’s…Abi’s mobile phone is a nightmare. She’s…she’s lost about…how many have you lost? Three? (Laughs).

R3: You’re not going to get a new one, are you, if you lose that one?

R1: I’m not gonna lose it, I’m…

R2: She’s lost three. I pay her contract for her.

R1: I’ve already told her all this so…

R2: Which is a bit ineffective, well, she’s already told you so…So the idea is that she has this iPhone for her birthday but that is on pay as you go. Umm, and then she’s going to pay the pay as you go.

I: Right.

R2: Umm, so we’ll see how that works out, but of course because she can iMessage, she hasn’t really…you almost, like, grew out of the phone in a way, didn’t you?

R1: Kind of, yeah.

R2: And moved on to something else, so I don’t really contact you on that phone, do I?

R1: Not really.

R2: I don’t think I ever did particularly.

R1: No.

I: Do you iMessage then?

R2: No. (Laughs).

I: Oh right, okay.

R2: No.

I: And…and I suppose you’re generally here when Abi gets back from school anyway so there’s not a thing of…

R2: Yeah.

R1: No, cos she’s normally either getting Sam or at work.

R2: I’m usually back with him though within about…

R1: Well, within about ten minutes.

R2: Ten minutes of her getting back so yeah, she’s usually first but then we’re about within about a quarter of an hour.

I: Right. Right, so that’s about three thirty or so.

R2: Yeah.

I: And then, Sam, do you get homework from school?

R3: Yeah.

I: And when do you do that?

R3: Umm, at the weekend, but, err, umm, sometimes I do it the day before it’s due in though cos our homework’s kind of easy.

I: So it’s not…do you get it every day then or just at weekends?

R3: Err, well, we get them every Friday.

I: Right. And then they’re due in on Monday or they’re due in the next…?

R3: The next Friday.

I: Oh right, okay. Okay. So it’s…so it’s not too bad, and where do you do your homework?

R3: At the table.

I: Here. Okay. Whereas, Abi, you presumably get homework every day?

R1: Yeah.

I: And how long is it supposed to take you?

R1: I think they’re normally take about an hour each.

I: An hour each?

R1: Yeah.

I: What, you mean an hour per day or an hour per subject?

R1: Per subject.

I: And how many subjects?

R1: I don’t get that many a day, like, maybe like two or three a day.

I: Right. Right. Gosh, that’s quite a lot. I mean, if it’s, err, if it’s meant to take you an hour, does it actually take you an hour?

R1: Yeah.

I: Right. Wow, that’s quite a lot.

R2: It is a lot.

I: Yeah.

R2: She works really hard, actually, I think.

I: Has it increased a lot this academic year?

R1: Yes, err, yeah, I mean in year seven we had a lot of homework and then we kind of didn’t have any for year eight and nine, umm, and yeah, now it’s gone up again, but that’s kind of fair enough because it is GCSEs.

I: Okay. And so what’s a typical sort of weekday evening, would you say?

R3: Go on my…

R1: Yeah, he’ll spend most of his time procrastinating.

R2: (Laughs).

I: That wasn’t how you described it, Sam. What would you say you were doing in the evening?

R3: Err…

R2: Here we go.

R1: (Inaudible 00.17.58).

I: So when you get home from school, what’s the first thing…what are the things you do? So you get home…

R2: It’s not funny.

I: I’ll put this…

R3: Err, probably go on my Nintendo console.

I: Right, okay. What…what are you playing on that?

R3: Mario and Sonic.

I: Right, right. How long do you play them for?

R3: Umm, I have no idea. What would you say?

R1: It depends what…maybe like three hours, kind of switching between different things. He does. He does, he goes on like the Wii U, he goes to the telly, he goes to the iPod…

R3: 3DS.

R1: He goes to the 3DS, he does. I’m not bullying him.

R2: No, no, I’m just thinking that some evenings he…

R3: Then the GameCube then the Wii U.

R1: Yes.

I: The GameCube.

R3: Yeah, it’s…

R1: Sam, that doesn’t matter right now.

R3: The Wii U can turn into a (inaudible 00.18.53).

I: Oh, okay.

R2: But also Sam has lots of lessons, actually.

R1: Yeah, that’s true.

R2: He has lots of after-school stuff, so…

I: Oh right. What sorts of things do you do after school then?

R3: Well, I have a chess club and I have a guitar lesson and I have a maths tutor.

R2: That’s it, isn’t it?

I: Right, so that’s like Monday to Thursday by the sound of it is taken up with something?

R3: Err, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

I Right.

R2: But then on Thursday for years we’ve had my friend’s little boy comes home, Sam’s friend, who’s not a little boy anymore, he’s Sam’s friend and he’s…how long has he come home for, Sam?

R3: Just like years, two.

R2: More than that, I think.

R1: Yeah.

R2: Five years, something like that.

I: And you are in the same school?

R3: Yeah.

R2: Same school, yeah.

R3: Same year but not in the same class.

I: Oh right, okay. Okay, so do you enjoy that?

R3: Yeah.

I: Okay.

R2: It’s a kind of institution. So Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, he has classes and then Thursday his friend comes. Friday is clear.

I: Do you have activities after school, Abi?

R1: Err, I have Maths tutoring on Thursday, and then my friend comes for a bit on Tuesdays but I think that’s it.

I: Right.

R1: I spend most of the time just like revising and stuff.

R2: You’re about to have Spanish, aren’t you, though?

R1: Yeah, on…

R2: Wednesdays.

I: Is that…do you do Spanish at school and it’s extra or is it a new language?

R1: No, it’s like extra because we’ve got a speaking test soon so I just want to make sure I can pronounce it properly.

I: Right, so quite a lot of exam oriented stuff?

R1: Yeah.

I: Okay. And so you come home and you spend a bit of time you were saying on your iPad and then it’s homework and so on?

R1: Yeah.

I: So sort of when and where do people eat?

R3: We eat tea there.

R2: Yeah, at the table, weekdays.

R1: Kind of six.

I: Yeah? Is it always you that cooks it?

R2: Yes.

I: And so you all sit down together?

R2: Yeah.

R1: Yeah.

I: And is that…is that a rule?

R2: Kind of on a weekday.

R1: Yeah.

R2: Yeah, I think it is, actually.

R1: If someone just took it, it wouldn’t be, like, okay.

R2: Yeah, I mean it’s not…

R1: Yeah, it’s not like you’ve got to be at the table.

R2: No, but I think it is a kind of informal rule, really, cos I think it’s just nice to do that and also it does give that kind of structure to the evening somehow, but it’s kind of…I don’t know if it’s ever…it just sort of…

R1: No, no, it’s not like something that was, like, made, it’s just kind of like a thing.

R2: Yeah.

I: So you sit down, how long do you spend sitting over teatime?

R2: Half an hour probably in total, yeah.

I: And then who clears up?

R2: Me. (Laughs).

R1: I am busy doing other stuff.

R2: I know, it wasn’t an accusation, it was an answer to the question. Yeah.

I: Any other rules around mealtimes? I don’t know…

R2: Don’t try and throw it up in the bin. Umm, don’t complain to your mother about what she’s cooked. No, I don’t think there are, really.

R1: No.

R2: Umm, we have some battles around who likes what and that kind of thing but there are no real rules.

I: Okay. And then…so as the evening goes on, who’s spending time where and with whom?

R1: Well, I’ll be upstairs with Flapjack and doing homework. Err, Sam would go and see his rats.

R2: Yeah.

I: You’ve got rats?

R2: Fancy rats.

I: Where are they?

R3: In my room.

I: Oh, so you’ve both got animals in your room. How many…how many rats do you have?

R3: Two.

I: And what do you have to do with them? I mean, is it the same kind of thing like with Flapjack that she needs exercise?

R3: No.

R2: What do you do with them, Sam?

R3: I feed them and walk them, and help clean them out.

R2: You read to them, don’t you?

R3: Yeah.

I: Oh, you read to them? Do you read them anything in particular?

R3: No.

I: Do they like it?

R3: I think they like the company.

R2: Sam and I usually, umm, we try to spend some time, don’t we? You sit…you sit on my bed and we have like a family kind of meeting in the evening or what Sam calls it, a Sam and Mummy meeting. Umm, and I read to him, he’s got a book at the moment so I read him a bit from his book before he goes to bed and then he goes to bed and then Abi and I usually spend some time together sort of one to one.

R1: Watching telly.

R2: Well, yeah, watching something or just…yeah, depending…it depends, really, doesn’t it?

R1: Yeah.

R2: But we always try and factor in a bit of time kind of one to one.

R1: Yeah.

R2: And sometimes you join in, don’t you, with the Sam and Mummy meeting?

I: Why…why is it called a Sam and Mummy meeting? I mean, does it have an agenda?

R2: Sometimes. (Laughs).

R1: He likes meetings, Sam.

R2: I think it came out of, because we used to have, when they were, umm, correct me if this is wrong…

R1: No, I know what you’re going to say.

R2: I think when there were sort of problems with things, I used to say we need to have a family meeting and then we…then we, umm, we’d have an agenda. We would actually say, right, what’s the agenda? And then I think the kind of Sam and Mummy meeting evolved from that so it’s just really me and Sam spending a bit of time together at the end of the day.

I: And do you talk about what you’ve been doing during the day then?

R3: Yeah.

R2: And he asks me what I’ve been doing in the day and then he tells me what he wants to buy.

R1: (Laughs).

I: Do you get pocket money?

R3: At the weekends.

I: Okay.

R2: I don’t give them pocket money. Their dad gives them pocket money.

I: Right, okay. And so then what time do you go to bed, Sam?

R3: Nine thirty, ten.

R2: (Laughs). Do you?

I: You’re raising your eyebrows.

R3: Probably nine thirty.

R1: Eight. Eight thirty.

R3: In bed?

R2: In bed.

R3: I’m in bed about eight thirty, and then asleep nine thirty, except not at the moment cos I’m just going straight to bed at the moment.

I: Okay.

R3: And I want to get better.

I: Right. So in theory it’s sort of in bed but then you can…is it that there’s a rule about when lights go off or is the rule you just have to be in bed and then you’re free to read for a bit longer or something like that?

R3: Yeah.

R2: He doesn’t put his lights out either. He doesn’t like…he doesn’t like his room going dark so he doesn’t put his lights out.

I: Right.

R3: Like, not my big lamp. I put that out.

R2: Yeah.

I: So you keep your lamp on? And do you…do you go in and check?

R2: Yeah.

I: Right.

R2: Check that he’s asleep.

R3: You come up in the middle of the night and see…?

R2: Not in the middle of the night, no. (Laughs). I’m usually asleep in the middle of the night but I usually check that you’re asleep when I go to bed. All right?

I: Okay. And do you…do you have to do any nagging about going to sleep or stopping reading or something?

R2: Not really. No. I mean, well, not Sam, me and Abi had a bit of a review, didn’t we? I wouldn’t call it nagging but we did have a conversation, umm, at the beginning of this term about sleeping, umm, and trying to sort of change things because she was getting very, very tired and I was kind of turning a slightly blind eye to it, umm, thinking that she, you know, she would sort this out for herself but she was getting so tired that I did feel, umm, I should sort of intervene and we had a discussion about it, but, you know, Abi’s very amenable to that, so, umm, we’ve kind of worked out a new schedule.

I: Of getting up later and…and you actually put your light off earlier?

R1: Yeah, I try and put it off about eleven thirty.

I: Right.

R2: She has a lot of problem falling asleep. It takes her hours and when I go to sleep my head hits the pillow and I’m asleep but she… It…it takes her a good couple of hours and if she goes to bed early then actually it’s worse because she just lies there not being able to get to sleep so it’s a kind of compromise, really, between what’s realistic and what’s doable, and also me understanding that she doesn’t have the same pattern as me, cos I’m like, well, just go to bed and go to sleep. (Laughs). Umm, so we worked out a bit of a timetable, didn’t we, for the afternoon and the evening.

I: Has that worked?

R1: Yeah.

I: And then the devices that you’ve got, Sam, are you allowed…do you have them up in your bedroom or do you have them all down here?

R3: Well, err, I have my 3DS, umm, in my room and then the iPod in my room and my Wii U is right at the back room, then, err, and then the Wii and the GameCube is like inside the Wii U cos they’re different consoles.

R1: That doesn’t matter, does it?

R2: Technically he sometimes doesn’t have his devices in his room but in reality I quite often find them hidden under the pillow, don’t I, Sam? (Laughs).

R3: The Wii U console.

R2: Yes.

I: So in theory you shouldn’t have them in your room, sometimes? But then they’re…

R3: Not at the moment.

I: They’re hidden.

R1: (Laughs).

I: Right. And do you use them just before you go to sleep?

R3: Well, yeah.

I: Is that…is that what you do to get yourself to sleep rather than, say, reading or something else, I don’t know?

R3: Well, sometimes I read. At the moment I’m reading before I go to bed.

I: Okay. Right. And, umm, err, so…so the…so we’ve talked a bit as well about the time you spend outside of the home during the week. Are there rules when you’re out?

R1: No.

R2: Like what?

I: (Laughs) I’m trying to think. I suppose it would be things like, you know, what…if you go out, what time you have to be in during the week?

R1: No.

R2: You don’t really go out, do you?

R1: I don’t go out.

R2: She doesn’t, so that really hasn’t arisen.

R1: No.

R2: And if you go out with friends or whatever…

R1: Well then I’d just be back by, like, eight or something.

R2: And then mostly they’ll drive you back and stuff or I’ll come and pick you up so…

R1: Yeah.

I: Right, right.

R2: I haven’t really had to cross that yet.

R1: No.

I: Okay. And what time do you go to bed?

R2: (Laughs). Before the children. Umm, about ten thirty, eleven, really, yeah.

I: Right, okay, right, right. Okay, and what’s the last thing you’ll do before you go to bed?

R2: Together or separately?

I: Umm, well, it depends, unless you…presumably separately.

R2: Yeah.

R3: Umm, err, I’m, err, reading and then I just fall asleep, umm, actually usually I just put it at my bedside table and just go to sleep.

R1: Yeah, I normally go on the iPad.

R3: I don’t really fall asleep when I don’t read…

R1: I can’t... I can’t fall asleep if I’m not on it.

I: And do you kind of…are you on it and then you feel you’re really sleepy?

R1: Yeah.

I: Right, okay, and then you put it down. Is that the same for you, Sam? You’re doing something and then you think, oh, I’m really tired and just put it away?

R3: Yeah.

R2: I find it really difficult cos I think it’s a real intergenerational, err, real conflict because I…one of the discussions that I was having with Abi was about stuff that says that if you’re on screens before you go to bed it stimulates your brain in such a way that you can’t fall asleep so I was kind of driving this…this forward at home.

R1: Yeah, well, I tried that. I tried not having it.

R2: She was saying, “But I can’t go to sleep without my iPad” so we were in this kind of situation where I was saying, “But your iPad is contributing to you not being able to go to sleep.”

R1: You know, but I thought, okay, I’m going to try this but I couldn’t sleep without going on it.

R2: So there you go so for me, I think it’s…it’s…it’s a struggle to respect that bit because I don’t understand it and it doesn’t come from my generation and I can’t understand how you can have that kind of glaring light in your face.

R1: It’s not glaring…

R2: Before you go to sleep but it, you know, it is what…what they say helps them go to sleep so I have to kind of respect that because I wouldn’t want somebody telling me how to go to sleep.

I: I suppose we have to wait for the next bit of research to come out that says, oh, it’s…it really helps you get to sleep.

R2; Yeah, it’s okay, yes, exactly. And I think it is difficult because, like I say, if they were saying to me, well, this is what you have to do before you go to sleep and I didn’t do it, I would get very upset by that.

R1: Yeah.

R2: Yeah.

I: Has that altered over the years? I mean, is there…? Cos you’re very much talking about sort of respecting what they need, but I mean, is there…was…was there a time when they were younger when you would feel more able to say actually this is what the routine is?

R2: Yeah.

I: And then what…at what age did it change?

R3: When I was eight.

R2: I think it’s…I think it’s probably more to do with the, umm, rather than an age thing I think it’s more to do with the availability or the expectation of devices as I like to call then, umm, because I would say that probably changed when you got an iPad, didn’t it? So, umm…

R1: Which was when, cos I can’t remember?

R2: I think it’s about two years ago.

R1: So it wasn’t year seven?

R2: No, it wasn’t year seven.

R1: That’s really weird cos I actually couldn’t remember when I got it.

R2: I think you’ve had it about two years.

R1: Okay, yeah.

R2: Umm, and he had an iPod last year.

R3: Yeah.

R2: So you’ve had that about nine months or something, so I think again that changed because of the accessibility of these things really.

I: Right. So it’s the technology has led the change?

R2: Yeah, definitely.

R1: Yeah.

I: Okay.

R2: And also because…because for me it’s not something that…I mean I…I suppose because it doesn’t come from my generation, it’s not actually something that I understand so to some extent I feel I have to be led by that technology because it’s their expectation from their generation. It’s…it’s what their friends do, and for Abi, it’s very much a social thing as well so, you know, I do, I feel like I’m running along behind it and there are times when I just say no more, because…but that’s more to do with me almost needing to catch up a bit, if that makes sense? Umm, but I…I do feel a bit at sea with it because, you know, when it was kind of, you read a book or I read to you and then you put your light out, that felt much more within my understanding.

I: Yes, yes.

R2: My generational understanding as well, but they tell me that they can’t go to sleep without these things so…

I: But does that mean, Abi, that your experience of being Sam’s age was very different because you didn’t have the devices?

R1: Yeah.

I: Is that right?

R1: When I was Sam’s age, I think I went to bed about nine, I read for half an hour and then, err, went to sleep about nine thirty.

R2: I still read to you.

R1: Do you think at that age?

R2: Yeah, I did.

R1: Okay.

R2: Definitely.

R1: Don’t give me that look.

R2: No, I’m just thinking that’s really bizarre, I did.

I: But you’re still reading to Sam but at a different time?

R2: But at a different time, yeah.

I: Okay.

R3: If I’m ill, I’ll just lie in bed, waiting to throw up or something.

R1: That’s nice, really helpful.

R2: I read, yes, so me and Sam have that time kind of before he goes to bed really. Not when he’s in bed, so we have that reading time in my bed, don’t we, or on my bed, yeah.

I: Right, right. Okay. And how does…how does the weekend differ to the weekdays then?

R3: I get up earliest.

R2: You do not. (Laughs). You don’t get up earliest, I get up earliest at the weekends.

R3: At the weekend?

R2: I do, but that’s not very early.

R1: Yeah, you go up earliest, you have about…

R3: No, but you get up, then you go back into bed, then I get up.

R1: What time do you get up?

R2: At the weekend?

R1: Yeah.

R2: Between half eight and nine. Sometimes I sit in bed doing things and sometimes I come down here.

R3: Well, I get up before eight now.

R2: You do not get up before eight at the weekend, that’s a fantasy.

R1: You get up about nine. He gets up at nine.

R3: I don’t.

R2: Okay.

R1: I get up like…

I: At the weekend there is some difference of opinion about who gets up first. Abi doesn’t get up in the morning.

R1: No, I get up at about one.

I: Oh really? You’d really sleep right through?

R1: Yeah.

I: Right.

R2: Not one.

R1: Well, it has been recently.

R2: Twelve on Sunday it was.

I: Okay. But you’ve gone to bed on a Friday and Saturday at your usual time or do you stay up a bit later?

R1: No, I definitely stay up later on those days.

I: Right.

R2: And again I’d say that’s a…I find that difficult because one of the conversations that we had recently about trying to reset the routines…

R1: I know but I just can’t do it like when I know that I can get up then, I just want some time to do that.

R2: I was saying to Abi she needed to not get up so late at the weekend because that was resetting her time clock and then it would knock on into the week but again, you know, she says it’s not…that’s not doable for her so… And I think for me I’m very aware that she…you know, she does work hard in the week and there is a lot of expectation from school so there isn’t so many just to be able to kind of be a young person, in however way that’s expressed.

I: And so what happens to things like breakfast in the morning then? Is that very different?

R2: You still have breakfast, don’t you, when you get up?

R1: Yeah.

R2: We have different breakfasts at the weekend.

I: What do you have? Is it more…do you cook more?

R2: Yeah, I mean, you quite often have something like porridge or something like that, don’t you so…?

R1: Yeah.

R3: I have the same.

R2: Yeah, Sam tends to have the same. Abi will have more of an event breakfast.

I: And will you and Sam sit and eat together as you’re up at similar times?

R2: For breakfast? No, not really.

I: Right.

R2: I might sit down and have a cup of tea with him, yeah.

I: And what sorts of times are you kind of together on a weekend or on your own or with other friends et cetera?

R3: I would go outside quite a lot at the weekend.

I: You’re outside? Doing what sorts of things, Sam?

R3: On Sunday my mum goes to car boot sales, sometimes I come with her.

R2: That’s a religion. We’re together really aren’t we, most of the weekend.

R3: Yeah.

R2: So we…we kind of nominate things for the weekends.

R1: We’ve got the dogs sometimes so we take them for a walk.

I: This is your dog sitting?

R1: Yeah, well (inaudible 00.39.24) now.

R2: Yeah, we walk. We go…we go…

R1: We do walk when we don’t have the dogs as well, actually.

R2: We go out for walks if the weather’s nice. We usually…I think we usually sort of say what are we going to do this weekend, don’t we?

R1: Yeah.

R2: And then we do it. So this weekend it’s, umm, Abi’s birthday party so we’re going up to London.

R3: On Friday’s her birthday.

R2: And then Sunday we said we would dedicate to trying to revamp Sam’s room because he needs some new furniture and that kind of thing so we’re all gonna do that. But mostly we kind of nominate stuff for the weekend.

R1: Yeah.

R2: And I think…I don’t know what you two think, but I think that kind of gives something to look forward to as well?

R1: Yeah.

R2: In the week.

R1: And it’s not as set cos in the week you’ve got to get everything done.

R2: So we usually try and have something kind of nice, don’t we, that we do at the weekend, whatever that is.

R1: Yeah.

I: And do you plan it far in advance or does it emerge or do you have a kind of meeting?

R1: Normally we kind of think about it on, like, a Friday or like Saturday morning.

R2: Or even before, actually.

R1: Yeah.

R2: I think we do sort of informally plan it, actually.

R1: Yeah, I guess.

R2: Yeah, quite often one of them will say can we go to…wherever it is, Stanmore Park is a favourite when it’s sunny.

R3: (Inaudible 00.40.42).

R2: Yeah, (inaudible 00.40.43) he likes to go to.

I: And you’ll all go together?

R2: Yeah.

I: Right. So weekend time is more as a…three of you?

R1: Yeah.

R2: And holidays.

I: And what about friends and seeing friends on the weekend, does that happen more?

R1: Umm, sometimes.

R2: Sam had a friend, didn’t you, on Sunday?

R3: Or in the holidays I have lots of friends come around.

R2: Yeah. Yeah, I mean last weekend you were out at Gabbie’s weren’t you?

R1: Yeah.

R2: And Sam was at George’s.

R1: Yeah, it’s not like every weekend.

R2: Yeah.

I: Do you do sleepovers? You said earlier you didn’t really like sleepovers but…

R1: No. If someone, like, invites me for a sleepover then I’ll go but normally I wouldn’t, no.

R2: What did you say about sleepovers? That when you’re young you think they’re amazing and then when you get older you realise it’s just lying on someone’s hard floor trying to go to sleep. Yes. (Laughs).

I: Yeah, absolutely.

R2: Sam would like to have more sleepovers, wouldn’t you?

R3: Well, yeah.

R2: But, yeah, sometimes.

I: And what’s stopping it? Is it not being invited or not enough space to host?

R3: Umm, I don’t know.

R1: I don’t really know what.

R2: I think it’s more that the people that he wants to have sleepovers with aren’t the people whose parents will let them…I mean, chiefly George, really, isn’t it?

R3: Yeah, cos me and him want a sleepover, once we set out all of the beds and stuff but she still said no.

I: Why? Why do they say no?

R2: Well, his mum works quite hard in the week and she’s got a thing about spending time together at weekends and stuff so she doesn’t want him coming for sleepovers and so it’s sort of negotiating those things. Sam went for quite a big one recently, didn’t you, at Ollie’s house and there were lots of you, so we did say we might do that. We might have that back at some point. But also, you know, sleepovers, they just get so tired because they’re up all night at his age.

I: Yes, yes.

R2: So…

I: And is meal times different, you know, is tea time still six or is it different kind of…?

R2: No, it moves about, doesn’t it, at the weekend?

R3: When we come home, we, like, go to Tesco.

R2: Yes, sometimes we have tea out or we have sort of, like, you know, we go to Stanmore Park and have something, that kind of thing.

R1: Oh right.

R2: Yeah, no, it’s more flexible. It’s not such a…it’s not such a rule, is it, as in the week, sit down and have it at the table. The children like to have what they call snacky tea as well, don’t you, which is kind of not such good food. (Laughs).

I: Okay. Great, and do you go to bed a bit later at the weekend as well, Sam, or do you go at the same time?

R3: Yeah.

I: Okay, everyone’s a bit later.

R2: We all go at the same time, really, at weekends, don’t we?

R3: Yeah.

I: So you…do you stay up later than normal?

R2: Yeah, I mean normally we have something…

R1: To watch.

R2: That we…we’ll watch a film together or we’ll watch something…

R1: Casualty.

R2: On the television that everyone likes so we have…what they call…what we call party night on a Saturday so we’ll have, like, nice nibbles, all that kind of thing and watch something together, so we’ll all go to bed at the same time.

I: Do you watch television together much in the week?

R2: No.

I: No, it’s interesting how things change from…

R2: Yes. It’s…it’s a sort of…it’s definitely nominated party night, isn’t it, and we do call it party night actually. Yeah.

I: Yeah, nice. So I guess we’ve already said quite a lot about sort of when you spend time with screens which tends to be this period of after school…

R1: Yeah.

I: And in between homework and then before bed. Umm, what about you? How much time do you spend with screens, computers, do you have…what do you have?

R1: Tablet.

R2: Umm, I’ve got a PC, which doesn’t work very well, umm, which is Abi’s nightmare because it needs sorting out, umm, cos I’m IT illiterate and, umm, I’ve got a little tablet that I use for, umm, emails and stuff, umm, and I’ve got Twitter but I don’t…it’s not second nature to me. I mean, I use it mostly for work emails and that kind of thing, so…

R3: Or Twitter and YouTube.

R2: Yes, so it’s not something...

I: So how much time do you spend…is it mainly at work that you’re using a screen or do you use it at home?

R2: Well, I use it at home for work because I come home from work…I try to come home from work early to pick him up so then I’ll pick work up, you know, when he…when we get home and…and into the early evening as well, so I suppose I use it sporadically, umm, but for work. I don’t…I mean I, you know, I am very, umm, I’m very sort of aware of being a bit of the lost generation in terms of something like that, when I came…when I was at school, it was just in that point where before there was any kind of computer education, but there was very shortly after. It started to become, umm, more mainstream, I think so I’m, I struggle with it all. I do, really. Umm, and the amount of it as well, umm, yeah, so for me it’s…I…I use Twitter, again for work, but I don’t really use any of these things personally. I’ve got a personal email account that I probably email to friends on, umm, who live in London, umm, but…

I: Do you use a mobile much?

R2: Phone? Yeah, I do. Are you answering your question for me?

R1: I said yes, yes phone.

R2: I do.

R1: Cos mobile…

R2: Not for phone calls, for texts. I…I quite like texting. I find that quite helpful.

I: Do you use the landline phone much?

R2: Hardly at all, do we? So the landline really exists for broadband now.

I: Right, right.

R3: Well, people call quite a lot.

R1: No, they don’t.

R2: They don’t call on the landline, really. A few people call on the landline. I mean, it is one of the things that I’m aware of that when I was young, you would have picked up the phone and called your friends, but I don’t think it would occur to you to pick up the phone and call your friend, would it? No. So if they can’t get in touch with their friends, it would be like, “Oh, I can’t get in touch with so and so because they’re not answering their iMessage or whatever.”

I: Is it always iMessage, generally?

R1: I think most people would text but I…I use iMessage most, yeah.

I: Right.

R2: Cos your phone isn’t necessarily working.

R3: I don’t really use iMessage.

R2: And it’s interesting in terms of sort of privacy and all that kind of thing, cos when I was young, Abi’s age, I would listen to my mother’s phone conversations. I had a particular place on the landing where I used to stand so I could hear what she was saying on the phone about me, umm, and also she would listen to me on the phone and get really irate about the amount of time I’d been on the phone and all that kind of stuff so, you know, it was a real sort of flash point, the phone, umm, whereas now, I’m not really…I don’t really know what she’s doing. (Laughs). And to some extent I don’t want to. This is a discussion that we’ve had as well. So, umm, but it’s much…it’s much more sequestered because…because if you chose to, you could hear it when I was young so…and I used to know when my mum was rubbishing me on the phone so…

I: Right, right. And yeah… Yeah, cos I was going to say how many of your devices are shared? I mean, there’s the television that you all watch together sometimes, but otherwise do you all have separate mobile devices?

R1: Yeah.

R3: Well, I like her playing on my Wii U with me.

I: Oh right, so you do play some games together?

R3: Yeah.

R1: If he forces me, yeah.

R2: The television is actually very old, actually, which is another conversation that we’ve had. The television was my mother’s television so it’s really, really old and I have talked to the children about is it okay to have such an old television because, umm, you can do live streaming and all this stuff on them these days.

R3: For my Wii U I have…

R2: Yeah, Sam’s got a little telly that he does his Wii U through, but actually…

I: Oh right, okay, where’s that?

R3: It’s in the back room.

I: Oh right, okay. So you just do it on that other telly, you don’t do it through the other one. Is that where it is, she says, pointing?

R2: Yeah, it is, it’s in there. I don’t…I’ve got a bit of a phobia about having televisions in there.

R1: It’s not a phobia.

R2: That’s too strong, but I don’t like having televisions dominating the room.

I: So when you watch it, do you actually take it out?

R2: No, you just open the cupboard but it’s a really old telly so it doesn’t have what it needs to take a Wii U or anything like that so in order for him to have that, he had to have a…a little television.

I: Oh right.

R2: But I think that’s actually quite nice because it means that he and his friends can be out the back and they’re not kind of in…cos this is quite a communal space, really.

I: Yeah, right.

R3: I’m in here sometimes with the 3DS or…and that, cos then I come on the sofa.

R2: Yeah.

R3: And start playing it.

R2: But the Wii U’s much louder so if you were in here and because this is our sort of communal space, I think it would be more disruptive so as it is, like, when James was here the other day, you could be out the back, couldn’t you, and…and…

R3: Yeah, cos on Wii U, umm, one thingy turns up for one and then the TV thing turns up really loud.

R2: But it interests me in a way that…that they’re not bothered about the television, cos I thought they might be and you’re not, are you?

R3: No.

I: No, absolutely. And do you have…do you have one kind of contract for…are there any disputes over the expense of owning something or is everything on a contract where it doesn’t matter how much use it gets? Cos I know, I mean, you’ve talked about the contract for your mobile phone but for the other devices, do they all work of wi-fi for which you’ve got broadband and so it’s not an additional cost?

R2: It’s not an additional cost. There are just…

R3: My Wii U takes the wi-fi.

R2: Yeah, there are disputes about…I mean, the contract, I think, on the mobile phone is a big mistake and that was part of my kind of learning curve, I would say, because at one point Abi was on pay as you go and then she was exceeding it, so I thought it made sense for her to be on a contract but because, you know, she’s my oldest child, she’s kind of my experiment, and actually then more or less stopped using your mobile phone, didn’t you, so I wouldn’t…when he gets a phone, I won’t do that for him, he’ll be on pay as you go. Umm, the disputes around mobile devices aren’t about expense really. They’re about the charger, who has possession of, umm, of the thing that charges their things, that’s a big dispute and also…

R3: The wi-fi.

I: But are those shared or is it just, like, one goes missing and then you use another one? Is that how it works?

R1: It’s just a bit weird because we did both have two chargers but each time we bought another one it would get lost or break, so we…and we bought so many, like so many. Like we were buying one every day.

R2: (Laughs)

I: Okay, so there are disputes over the charger and…

R2: And disputes over the wi-fi, who’s taking the wi-fi.

R3: My Wii U, cos my Wii U takes everything’s wi-fi.

I: Right.

R2: So I’ve said that at some point when I sort of feel more financially secure, I might switch…

R3: Like, the other day your iPad was taking it over.

R1: It wasn’t.

R2: To…to something that provides more wi-fi but I don’t want to do that at the moment.

R1: No, I know what you’re talking about.

I: Cos what…what happens if someone’s using all the wi-fi? It’s a big ignorant, does it mean the other person can’t get on, or you…?

R2: Yeah, it means you can’t connect, so what happens is somebody goes, “Aghh!”

I: What uses the wi-fi most? I mean, what…?

R1: The Wii U.

I: Oh right, okay.

R3: Or my 3DS takes everything’s wi-fi, or my Nintendo consoles usually take everything’s wi-fi.

R2: And the Wii U has only arrived since Christmas. Sam had it for Christmas, so, umm, so we…we probably need something that, umm, you can connect more devices to, because we didn’t used to have even not that long ago that many…

R1: Cos that one really only supports three devices.

I: Oh right.

R1: Which is completely…we were fine before. That was, like, more than we needed.

R3: So when I get my Gameboy Advance, it won’t…

R1: No, we can’t out anything else on it.

R2: No, it’ll…it’ll blow up or I will.

R3: I don’t…I can’t…

R1: I’m not gonna put my phone on it.

R3: I can’t even get internet on that anyway. You can’t use internet.

R1: Well, that’s okay then.

I: Does the router ever get switched off?

R3: Yeah.

R1: Only to, umm, try and make it work again, off and on again.

I: Right. It’s not a kind of…you don’t switch it off at night?

R2: No. I have confiscated devices at various times. At what point I confiscated Abi’s…look at her face. At one point I confiscated her phone .I can’t remember why it was, but then, umm, she and her friend, I didn’t switch it off so she and her friend rang it and found it (Laughs), and kept getting it and then slipping it back where I’d hidden it.

R1: Only because you took my iPad and my phone next to each other, so I just found that and then I found my iPad.

I: So is that…is confiscating devices a common punishment?

R2: No.

R1: I think she probably…you only do it cos it was kind of like linked to the devices.

R2: I can’t remember why now. It’s not common.

R1: No.

R2: I’ve only done that to her once but I knew it…

R1: Normally if you’re annoyed with me you just tell me to sort it out.

R2: I think, I just…with you, I…I can’t actually remember why it was but I did…I do think that it…I knew that it would be the most painful thing that I can possibly do to you, so Sam’s I confiscate occasionally when he really isn’t just doing anything other than being on screens and we’ve had sort of arguments about it.

R3: If you confiscate one, I’ve got more though I can play on.

I: So there are ways of getting around it. Okay.

R3: Then I’ll just hide the other ones so you can’t take it.

I: It all gets subverted. Okay, oh, look, this is great. I’m aware that it’s kind of your teatime now, isn’t it, so I…