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Guidance

Communicating your policy for prohibiting the use of mobile phones in schools to parents

Updated 19 January 2026

Applies to England

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This document provides information to help you communicate with parents and pupils about your school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones. It should be read alongside the [mobile phones in schools](#) guidance and the [behaviour in schools](#) guidance as the school's approach to implementing its mobile phone policy should be consistent with its whole school approach to behaviour.

Facts and figures to support discussions with parents

Research from the Children's Commissioner shows that the overwhelming majority of schools – 99.8% of primary schools and 90% of secondary schools – already have policies in place that limit or restrict the use of mobile phones during the school day.

According to The National Behaviour Survey (2024 to 2025), **58% of secondary school pupils (rising to 65% for key stage 4 pupils) reported mobile phones being used without permission in at least some lessons**^[footnote 1]. This not only distracts the single pupil using the phone, but disrupts the lesson for a whole class, and diverts teachers' efforts away from learning.

Parents can play an important role in supporting the school in effectively implementing its policy on mobile phones and eliminating this form of distraction for pupils in lessons.

Mobile phones have already been prohibited or restricted in schools in one in four countries worldwide,^[footnote 2] including France, The Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, Saudi Arabia and Singapore. It may be helpful, when setting out a new position to parents, to explain that restrictions on the use of mobile phones is not unique to schools in England.

Screen time can displace positive activities.^[footnote 3] Socialising, exercise, and good sleep are positive influences on wellbeing. All these can be displaced by screen time. By prohibiting the use of mobile phones during the school day, including break and lunchtimes at school as well as in lessons, more time for socialising and exercise can be created supporting children's friendships and interactions with peers. Parents should be encouraged to consider the impact screen time has on their child's sleep and work together with schools to promote children's wellbeing.

One in five children has experienced bullying online. Data from Ofcom (2025) suggests that over 3 in 10 children (31%) aged 8 to 17 have experienced somebody being "nasty or hurtful" towards them via communications technology.

The likelihood of this increases with age, and girls are more likely than boys to experience this type of behaviour. Children are as likely to experience someone being "nasty or hurtful" to them through social media (16%) as face-to-face (15%).

In addition, 31% of children aged 8 to 9 have seen something “worrying or nasty” online, but only 65% of children aged 8 to 9 would “always tell someone.”[\[footnote 4\]](#).

Ways to communicate with parents about mobile phones

Communicating the policy to new parents and pupils and reinforcing the policy with existing parents and pupils are important ways to ensure all members of the school community clearly understand expectations relating to mobile phone use. When changes are made to the way in which mobile phones are managed in schools or in response to particular issues that arise, clear and thorough communication with parents and pupils is vital to emphasise the school’s expectations.

It is important that schools engage collaboratively with parents. Prohibiting mobile phones from school will not eliminate all risks associated with children using a mobile phone. Good, clear communication about the risks of mobile phone use and the benefits of mobile phone-free time can support parents in managing their child’s mobile phone use outside school. In return, parents are expected to reinforce schools’ policies and expectations and to engage constructively with their child’s school if the policy is breached or sanctions imposed.

Introducing or amending a mobile phone policy

Schools are expected to be mobile phone-free environments. Headteachers are best placed to decide how this policy should be implemented in the context of their school and how specific cases are managed. Gaining parental support can help a school successfully implement its policy. The following tips can help a school successfully implement a new policy on the use of mobile phones:

- consulting parents and pupils when deciding how to introduce or amend the school’s mobile phone policy
- ensure all pupils and parents are informed well in advance and in the run-up to a change in policy
- use trial days and weeks before enforcing a new policy to support every pupil to meet the expectations

- use a variety of methods of communication to ensure that all parents are familiar with the school's change in policy on mobile phone use
- explain the benefits of prohibiting the use of mobile phones in schools to parents
- communicate directly with parents of pupils who may need a reasonable adjustment or adaptation to the school's policy to co-produce a suitable plan

Reinforcing an existing mobile phone policy

Even when a policy is established, regular reminders ensure parents and pupils know that this is something the school is paying attention to and taking seriously. A variety of methods of communication can be used to reinforce the school's policy:

- share positive experiences which have resulted from successfully establishing a mobile phone-free environment with parents
- encourage parents to reinforce the school's policy at home and support the creation of a culture free from the distraction of mobile phones
- reassure parents that in an emergency they can contact the school office to get a message to their child

Methods of communication with parents

Regular, one-way communication (such as newsletters, emails, and messages home through pupils) can be useful to provide key messages. However this should be interspersed throughout the school year with two-way communication, such as phone calls (where appropriate), open evenings and induction events. By utilising a range of methods, it is more likely that messages will reach all parents and be reinforced. In addition, there may be some situations where the law requires communications to be made in a particular format, such as in writing or on paper.

Maintained schools, academies, non-maintained special schools, and independent schools should publish details of the school's policy on prohibiting the use of mobile phones, either within the existing behaviour policy (which, for maintained schools, other than hospital schools and pupil referral units, must be published on the school website or, if the school has no website, another website parents can access)^[footnote 5] or as its own standalone document.

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1. [National behaviour survey academic year 2024 to 2025 ↵](#)
 2. [UNESCO \(2023\) Global education monitoring report, 2023: technology in education: a tool on whose terms? ↵](#)
 3. [UK CMO commentary on screen time and social media map of reviews ↵](#)
 4. [Children's Media Literacy Report 2025 ↵](#)
 5. [The School Information \(England\) Regulations 2008 \(legislation.gov.uk\) ↵](#)

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