

Controlling Mobile Phones

It has been reported that schools in England have been given new regulations to prohibit the use of mobile phones during the school day.

The government stated the shift was to "*minimise disruption and improve behaviour in classrooms*".

This is not in isolation, as this same ban has already been implemented in many schools already banning phones including one of England's largest school academy Ormiston Academic Trust which has around 35,000 pupils at its 42 state schools across the country.

A spokesperson for the trust told the BBC that "*teaching and learning, behaviour and children's mental health are all impacted negatively by mobile phones*". But one school leaders' union said the most compulsive use of phones happened out of school and called the change a "non-policy for a non-problem".

The new guidance comes almost three years after initially calling for a ban. Education Secretary Gillian Keegan explained that the aim is to provide consistency and "*reset the social norm*" by establishing that mobile phones should not be used during the school day. While many schools already have restrictions in place, policies vary, with some allowing phones during break times and others enforcing a complete ban.

The new guidance suggests several approaches, such as banning phones on school premises or allowing pupils to keep them, provided they remain unseen and unused throughout the day. Schools are encouraged to develop policies that suit their specific needs, with the

overarching goal being to support pupil welfare and ensure that lessons remain focused.

The issue of mobile phones in schools has sparked wider discussions about online safety, with some advocating for restrictions on children's access to social media. As debates continue, the government aims to ensure harmful content is kept out of reach, while schools focus on effective learning environments.

Mobile phones, while useful at the right time and place, and an aid to learning, can become unhelpful distractions for children when in learning environments. Discipline and self-control is at the centre of the use of mobile phones, more so than the introduction of school policies or outright bans.

2 Timothy 1:7 states *For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.* God has given us sufficient power to use and then leave the resources we have access to - we learn to control them and not allow them to control us.

A familiar quote is:

Your mobile phone has replaced your camera, your calendar and clock, don't let it replace your friends or your family.