

Should mobile phones be banned in school?

The UK Government supports the idea, but not everyone agrees.

What you need to know

- **Matt Hancock, the Member of Parliament (MP) in charge of digital, culture, media and sport issues, wants more schools to ban mobile phones.**
- **The London School of Economics found that in schools where mobile phones are banned, test scores of 16-year-olds improved by 6.4%, and that banning phones is the same as adding five days of extra learning to the school year.**
- **France will ban the use of mobile phones in school from September this year. Students will be allowed to take their phones to school but can't use them, even during breaks.**

WOW!
Recent research revealed that some teenagers spend up to 12 hours a day "mindlessly swiping" their smartphones.



At least 50% of children in the UK aged five to 15 regularly use a mobile phone and the number is rising. Mobile phones can be great for connecting with family and friends, for playing games and finding out all sorts of amazing information, but there is growing evidence that they are also distracting students from learning during school time. Schools are free to set their own rules about whether to allow phones in the classroom but Matt Hancock, the politician who is in charge of digital and cultural matters, has said that more schools in the UK should ban them. Some countries are already one step ahead of the UK. From September, France will ban all pupils from using their phones at school. What do you think? Should the UK do the same?

YES – phones stop students from learning

There is no need to use a mobile phone at school. If students are using them in the classroom, there's a good chance they are not listening to the teacher or doing their work. That's distracting them and other pupils around them. Besides, research shows that in schools where phones are banned, students do better in tests. Not having one allows children to talk to each other and play games during breaks and it also means children who don't have a phone won't feel left out. Banning them will also stop people cheating as it is very easy for students with smartphones to access information quickly when they are not supposed to. Children can take their phones to school – but they should be switched off until school ends.

NO – phones are part and parcel of life

Banning mobile phones is not the answer. Phones can be an important educational tool, especially if students do not have access to computers. Smartphones provide a world of knowledge at your fingertips – they can help students to learn and to share ideas and information. Having one to hand might also be useful in an emergency – if you need to call 999 or contact a parent or guardian. Instead of banning phones, schools should teach children how and when it is appropriate to use them. For example, playing a game on your mobile during break time may be ok, but doing it in class is not. Learning how to use a phone responsibly is an important life skill, so starting at school is a good idea.

YES Three reasons why mobile phones should be banned at school

- 1 Phones distract children at school and stop them from learning.
- 2 Children should be encouraged to talk to each other during breaks rather than using social media and watching videos – it's better to interact with your friends.
- 3 Banning phones will stop children from cheating in tests.

NO Three reasons why mobile phones shouldn't be banned at school

- 1 Phones can be used as educational tools – they're great for finding stuff out and for sharing ideas and information.
- 2 They're useful if there's an emergency and a pupil needs to call an adult.
- 3 Schools should teach children how to use phones responsibly, not ban them completely.

THE WEEKLY POLL

To find out what everyone is voting on this week visit:
theweekjunior.co.uk/polls

YES

NO



What do you think?

Each week we ask our readers to vote in our The Big debate poll. You can find out what we're voting on at the moment by visiting theweekjunior.co.uk/polls.

The aim of the Big debate page is to present two sides of an issue fairly and objectively, in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on the page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties. The page is created in association with the English-Speaking Union, an educational charity helping young people discover their voice and realise their full potential. For more information, please see esu.org



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