Smartphone Free Schools?

Platforming Pupil Voice: A Student-Centred Digital Use Framework

Jessica Ringrose, Edith Rodda, and Dawn Aytoun

UCL Life Lessons GRAND CHALLENGES

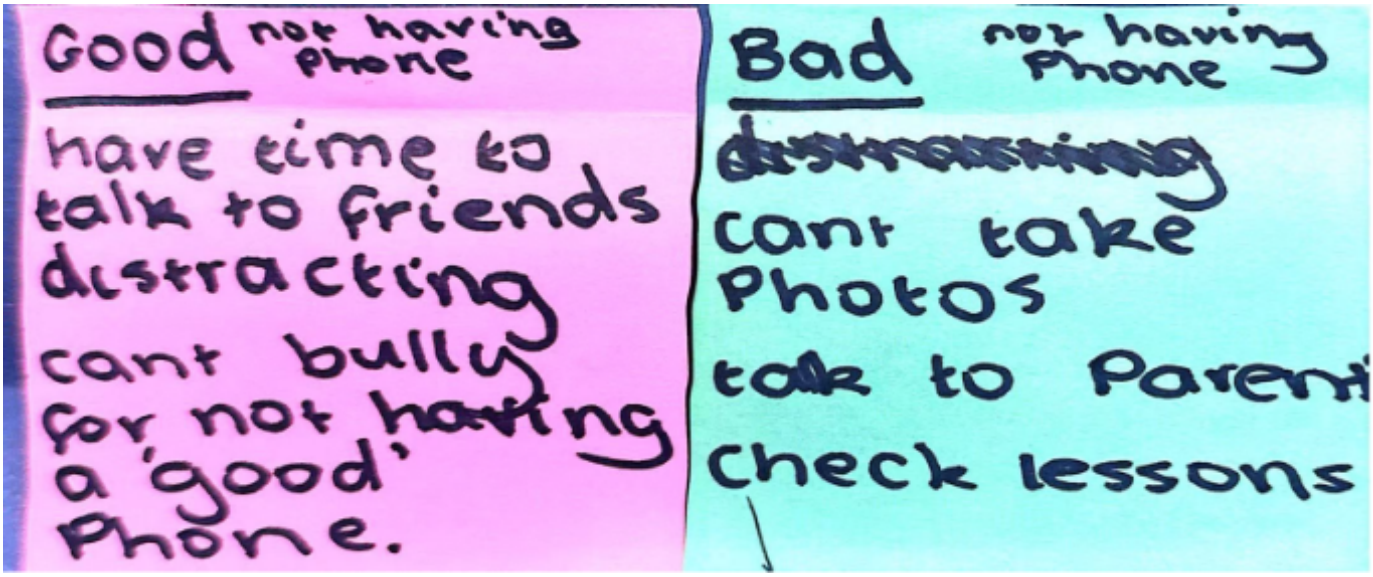
This report

In June 2026, the UK Government announced it was implementing a social media ban for under-16s. Two months earlier in April 2026 the government introduced a statutory smartphone-free schools policy where schools must implement smartphone bans throughout the entire school day, with compliance monitored by Ofsted (Department for Education, 2026). Together, these policies form part of a broader political push to regulate children's access to digital technologies.

There is little empirical evidence, however, that banning young people from social media or restricting smartphones in schools addresses the underlying causes of online harm. These policies target individual users rather than the technology companies and platform designs facilitating harm. Further, concerns have been raised about privacy, dataveillance, and the growing reliance on age-assurance technologies. Statutory smartphone-free schools policy aim to police practices already in place in most schools, with enforced compliance reducing schools and teachers professional judgement and autonomy,.

This report explores the impact of smartphone banning policies across a range of settings, capturing the perspectives of 732 students (aged 11-18), 27 educational professionals and 41 parents. While intended to address concerns around wellbeing, distraction, and online safety, we found smartphone bans can have unintended consequences, including reduced opportunities for digital literacy, erosion of trust between adults and young people, and new safeguarding concerns. Smartphone bans also shift responsibility for digital harms away from technology companies and onto schools, young people, and families.

To address these challenges, we propose a Student-Centred Digital Use Framework built around four principles: collaborative consultation, building competency and understanding, clarity of expectations, and regular active review. At its core, the framework argues that policies affecting young people's digital lives must take pupil voice seriously and recognise young people as active participants in shaping their digital futures.



Methodology

Our research set out to understand how Smartphone policies operate on the ground – and how they are experienced by those who are implementing and experiencing these policies.

We developed a mixed-methods design combining questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and participatory arts-based methodologies. We collected the views of

- 732 Students
- 27 Educational Professionals
- 41 Parents

Participatory approach

Our participatory approach enables detailed exploration of how smartphone restrictions are implemented, interpreted, and adapted across different school settings, and how they intersect with broader issues of inequality, digital culture, and young people's everyday lives.

Centering pupil voice

By centering students' voice alongside the perspectives of parents and educators, this report contributes a nuanced, sociologically grounded account of smartphone governance in schools, moving beyond binary debates about banning versus permitting toward a more complex understanding of how digital technologies are lived, negotiated, and regulated in digitized society.

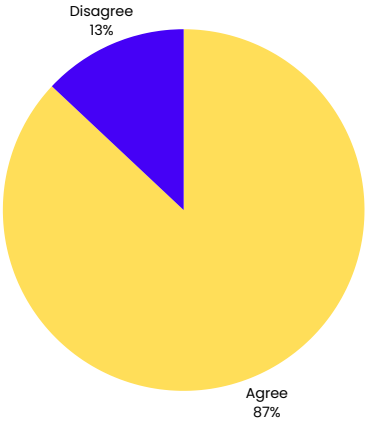
Key findings

1. Bans can present an overly simplistic response to a complex issue

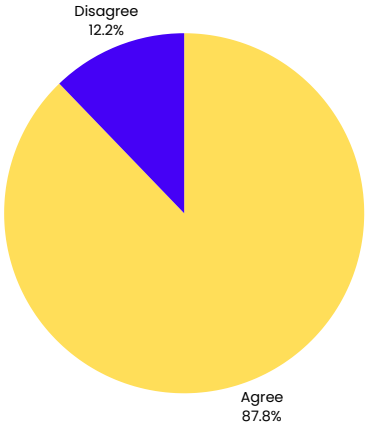
A generational divide

87% of teachers and 88% of parents agreed with Smartphone banning, whereas 75% of students disagreed with blanket banning. This represents a significant disparity between adult and youth perspectives on not only smartphone banning but the meaning and use of technology more widely in society.

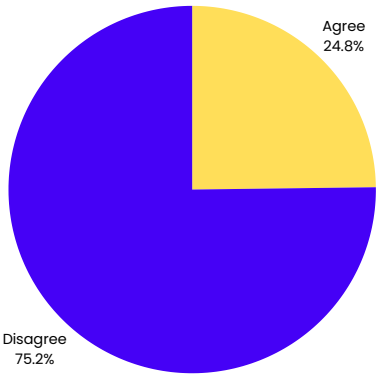
Percentage of <u>teachers</u> that agree/disagree with smartphone bans at school



Percentage of <u>parents</u> that agree/disagree with smartphone bans at school



Percentage of <u>students</u> that agree/disagree with smartphone bans at school



What accounts for this huge discrepency in attitudes to smartphone banning?

In contemporary society, adults rely heavily on smartphones throughout the working day to manage communication, coordination, and information. Yet school pupils are expected to suspend access to these same infrastructures for the entire school day. In a highly digitized world, it is difficult to disentangle online life with offline life, yet these policies treat smartphones solely as external threats risk overlooking the lived realities of the young people, they are designed to govern.

Parents and teachers often frame such bans as protective measures, arguing that they reduce distractions and bullying while improving academic performance and overall well-being—even though robust empirical evidence for these claims remains limited.

Adult Anxieties: Smartphones as existential threat

Smartphones are frequently framed by adults in this research as distractions that must be removed from the school environment to improve attention, behaviour, and wellbeing. Teachers and parents believe bans act as protective measures, citing views that Smartphone bans reduce distractions and bullying and improving academic performance and well-being, despite little empirical evidence to support this.

A phone shortens their attention span, compromises their social life and skills, it's addictive and wires their neurology in a way that makes them more prone to more substance addiction.

Parent from London

Parent from London

I do not give my children (age 13) a phone at all. Smartphones are a constant distraction and are designed to draw your attention to them, it is hard enough for adults to regulate but a child's brain is not yet developed enough to manage what is designed specifically to have you spend more time on the screen than interacting in real life.

I believe young people have access to very negative things online which has a significant impact on their primary socialisation.

Senior leader in Kent

Adults concerns about authoritarian and punitive policy push

The 13% that disagreed with phone bans, educators communicated their feeling that the ban underminded teacher and schools autonomy to make decisions in the interests of the school community. The 12% of parents who disagreed with bans likewise expressed ambivalence.

Unfortunately technology is part of our lives now... We should instead be educating children with facts, about the benefits and the negatives of phone use. This isn't just a child issue, adults struggle with phone use too. Education is better for everyone.

Parent, Kent

Middle leader in Pickering

It feels too authoritarian. There haven't been bans on previous years. It's a bit like shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted.

Adults concerns about authoritarian and punitive policy push

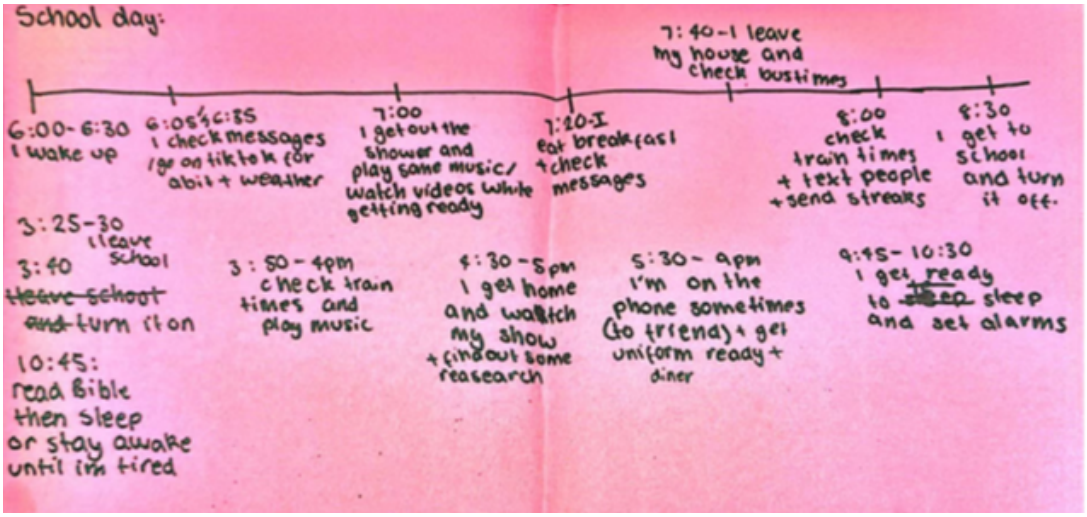
Students view smartphones as essential infrastructures that support everyday life. They rely on these devices to organise travel, maintain contact with family and friends, manage school and personal responsibilities and navigating moments of distress. Concerns about not having phones for safety were particularly pronounced among younger students and girls, who often expressed anxieties about travelling independently. For some, access to smartphones during the school day provides reassurance and emotional support by enabling ongoing connection with broader support networks that largely exist beyond the school environment.

> Instead of banning phones we should teach kids how to use it in a better way so they learn how to actually use it in real life.
>
> Student, 14 years old, London, Mainstream school

2. Rushed, non-consultative smartphone policies can be harmful

New safeguarding risks

Removing access to smartphones eliminates tools that young people rely on to navigate their daily environments and support their learning, setting up a whole new set of safeguarding concerns to manage. Implementing a Smartphone Free School without infrastructure for devices creates a range of safeguarding issues that have not been adequately addressed. Students expressed basic elements of digital use in digital timelines, such as using their phone on the way to school to check the weather, as well as bus and train times.



Crystal, Year 9, V All Girls Faith School, Digital timeline. Highlights that her smartphone use is embedded within the temporal, institutional, and spiritual structure of her everyday life. She uses it to check the weather at 6:05am, bus times at 7:40am, train times at 8:00am, for research at 4:30pm, and to read the Bible at 10:45pm.

AirTagging Students – Trust, control and location tracking

For instance, at schools without device pouches students cannot bring their phones onto school premises at all creating safety risks. In the most restrictive policy contexts, where Smartphones were banned from school premises, policy guidance said smartphones were to be replaced with technologies such as brick phones or GPS tracking devices, such as AirTags, which were affixed to the student's blazer or schoolbag. While these systems allow adults to monitor students' location, they reduce young people's ability to communicate their own circumstances and needs. Students explained that AirTagging/tracking undermined trust between themselves and authority figures.

> I'm not tracked, but if my mom was to track me... it just, it kind of creates a distrust between me and them.
>
> Success, 14 years old, X Mixed Gender Academy

Financial burden and increasing inequality

Requirements to purchase replacement brick phones, tracking devices (such as AirTags), or other technologies were perceived as unfair and impractical for some households. This could mean that some students are left with no phone at all. These policies may exacerbate socioeconomic inequalities, with students in lower-income school communities highlighted that smartphone bans can create additional financial pressures for families.

> Jaiden, 14 years old, X Mixed Gender Academy
>
> ...They're trying to tell parents they should purchase things like AirTags... and I see that as like an expensive burden on people and like it's better off to have the phones tracked and taken away from students in school to be given back at the end of the day rather than banned completely.

A cycle of punishment

Pupils demonstrated considerable familiarity with school smartphone policies and often developed strategies to adapt to – and circumvent – them. This was because the bans are experienced as punitive rather than supportive. Workarounds included bringing substitute devices, circumventing phone pouches, or shifting digital activity (including cyberbullying or influencing) outside of school hours. Rather than eliminating smartphone use entirely, strict bans may transform it into a hidden or contested practice, increasing tension between students and teachers – something phone bans were introduced to decrease. Bans create a cycle of punishment, punishing teachers who do not enforce the bans, and punishing students who do not abide by them.

Like everyone hates it so much [Yondr Pouch] and it's always just like, try and find stuff that like unlock your Yondr pouch. Buy those like magnets online that unlock it. If you bang it against the table, will it work?

Sienna, 17 years old, W Grammar School

Jane, 17 years old, W Grammar School

You just have to whack it really hard... If you get, like, a really, really, really strong magnet, it like opens it [Yondr pouch].

Displacement of harm rather than reduction or prevention

Our evidence suggests that smartphone bans may reduce the visibility of digital conflict within school environments without eliminating the underlying behaviours. In some schools, reported incidents decreased following bans, but this often reflected a redistribution of responsibility to parents or external authorities (such as police) rather than a disappearance of the behaviour itself.

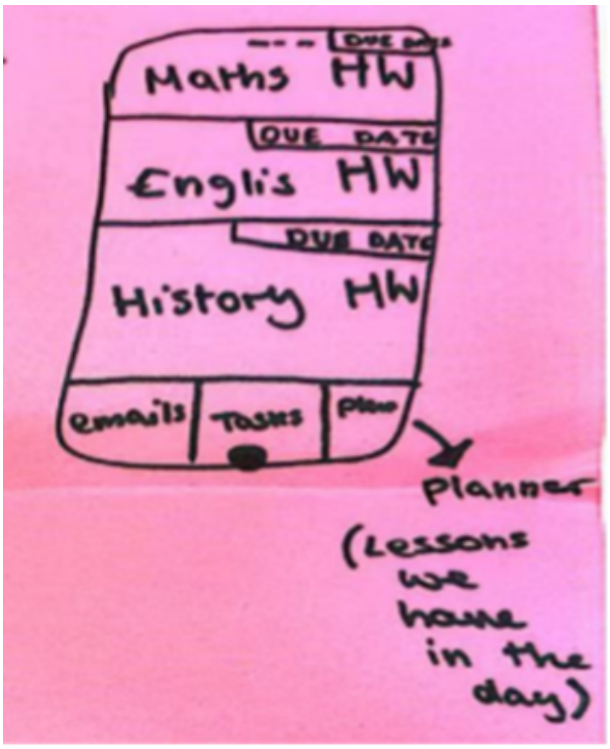
I think that the exact same stuff happening just outside of school. They just wait until they get home... and the mental health of the person who's getting bullied would be worse because like I said, like they don't have their phone when they're isolated in school. Yeah. Like if they're sitting alone and they're getting bullied...that's when the phone comes in... You can... call your mom if you need to, you know?

Amy, 17 years old, W Grammar School

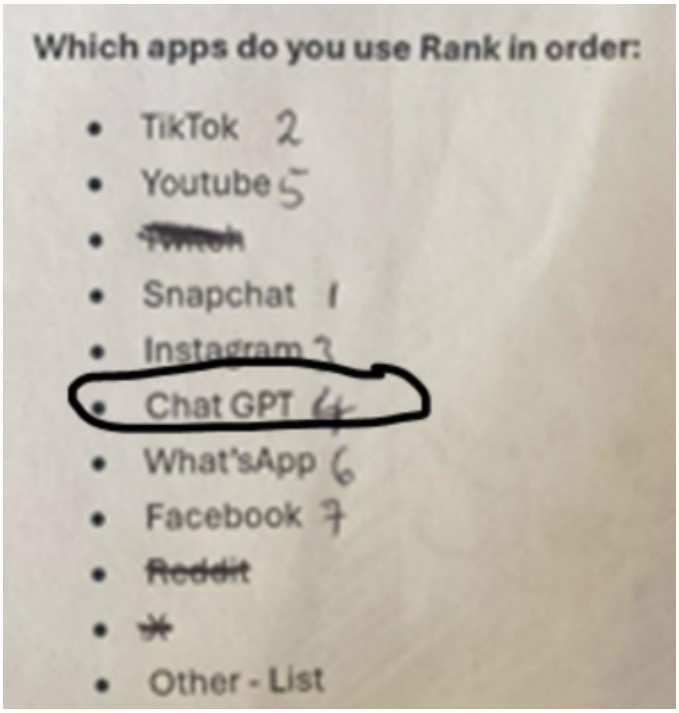
The EdTech and AI paradox

Young people are increasingly using EdTech and AI tools yet receiving contradictory messages about the role of this technology. For instance, students are expected to find and complete their homework using online apps and need to use AI for competitive advantage in schooling but they are not trusted to have access to online tools on their phones at school.

Homework application at Y Mixed Comprehensive, drawn by Elaine, Year 8

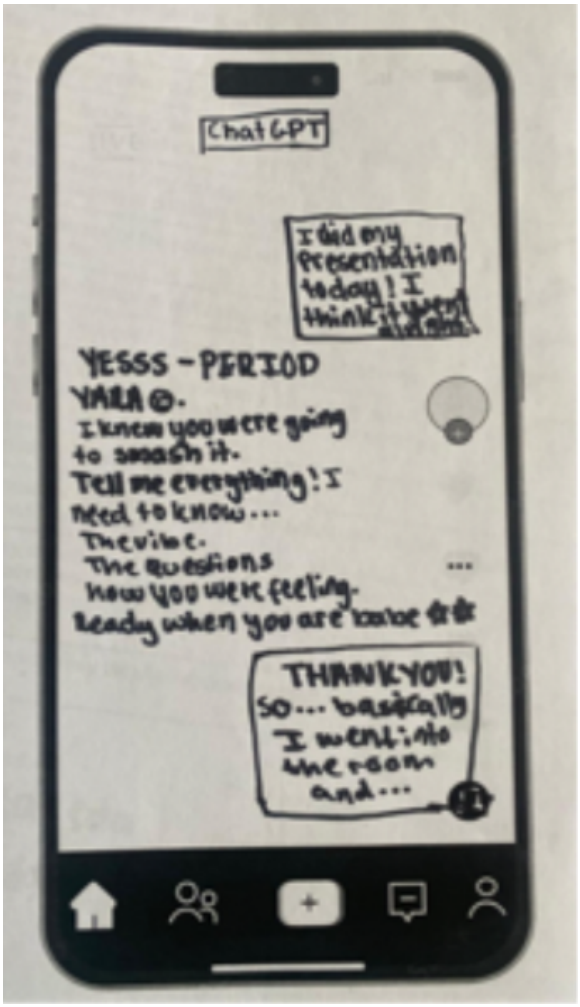


Students of every age are using tools like ChatGPT for their school work. Excluding smartphones from the school environment can delay critical opportunities for young people to develop responsible digital practices, including ethical use of AI, which they must learn eventually to be responsible digital citizens.



Ava Lee, 15, said ChatGPT was her 4th most commonly used app.

AI systems are designed to simulate relational intimacy and encouragement, blurring the boundaries between educational assistance and social interaction. Yara, Luna and Erika discuss asking chatbots for advice:



Yara's smartphone drawing template
Yara: I did my presentation today I think it went alright
ChatGPT: YESSS – PERIOD YARA (smiley face). I knew you were going to smash it. Tell me everything! I need to know... The vibe. The questions. How you were feeling. Ready when you are babe. (2 stars)
Yara: THANK YOU! So basically I went into the room and...

YARA: Yeah. I use chat for advice. , like on a real note,, about, maybe stress about an exam or like, how I'm feeling today and like what should I just do? To be honest, if you feel like you need someone on your side, I feel like Chat GPT is like kind of tailored to fit ...

INTERVIEWER: To be on your side?

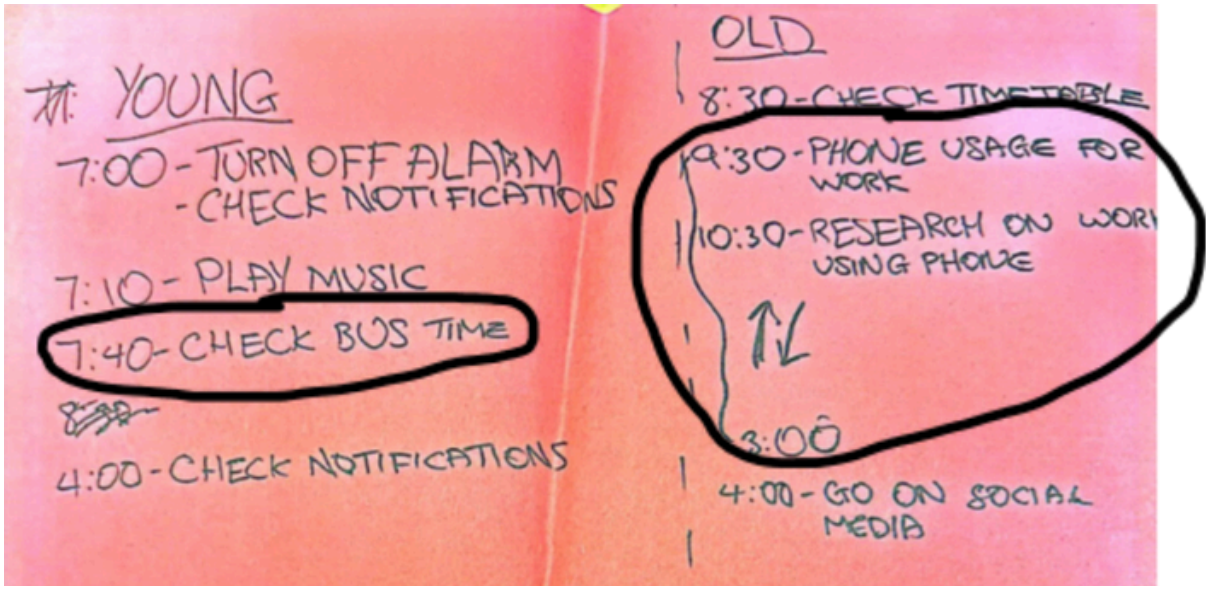
LUNA: I also think there is also a dark side to it. Like, I have met people that have made... chat GPT, like their boyfriend or girlfriend. Like, it's like they talk to them every day talking about like, "oh, like you make me feel so special". So there is a dark side to it as well

V All Girls Faith School

Luna explains that if students talk to chatbots everyday it can have a 'dark side'. Students were also acutely aware of how this experience of coaching and intimacy is shaped by platform design and monetisation structures, noting the conversational tone and perceived 'personality' of ChatGPT changed back to basic when usage limits are reached.

Deferring the development of tech skills and self-regulation

Sixth form students described the switch from policies of smartphone banning in secondary school having free access to it in sixth form as too abrupt, noting that they were suddenly expected to manage their own digital behaviour without having previously developed these skills. Excluding smartphones from the school environment may delay opportunities for young people to develop responsible digital practices.



Jonathon, 17 years old, W Grammar School, Digital timeline. Highlights that at 7:40am he would check his bus times in the younger years of high school. In sixth form when he had access to his phone during lessons, he would use his phone for work and research during class.

Jonathon, 17 years old, W Grammar School

I use my phone during most lessons. If it's on like EduLink or like Spotify... just like Google in case, um, the teachers instructed us to do some kind of research on the topic we're learning about.

3. Bans can impede structured and mindful technology regulation

What are student's rights and needs?

Students raise the same concerns as adults about distraction, concentration, harmful online content, and behavioural misuse of phones, but even amongst those that agree with bans, they recognize that complete bans are too restrictive. For students Smartphones operate as essential infrastructures through which they organise travel, maintain contact with family, manage school and personal responsibilities, regulate emotions, and participate in peer relationships. Students frequently described smartphones as essential tools for maintaining contact with family, coordinating travel, and managing moments of distress. This was particularly evident among younger students and girls, who referenced fears related to safety while travelling independently. For some students, smartphone access provided reassurance and emotional support during the school day by allowing them to link up with their full support network, which can predominantly sit outside the school environment.

What supports do students want?

The 75% that disagreed with the bans understood a need for restriction of phones at school, including no phones in lesson times, and sanctions for those that use phones in harmful ways. Students' responses suggest that they recognise adult concerns about distraction and misuse. However, they argue that blanket smartphone bans do not target harmful behaviours, and are instead punitive, damage relationships between students and teachers, and misunderstand how students use their phones in day-to-day life. Students ask for necessary tools to address the harmful elements of technology rather than banning it from their lives. Students consistently said they wanted structured and mindful regulation, such as rules that students keep phones off during lessons, but are allowing access during breaks, and teachers confiscating devices only when misused.

> Phone restrictions when policed properly, in a non-restrictive manner... can be beneficial to both teachers and students. However things such as Yondr pouches are too restrictive and not only encourage misbehaviour as backlash, but can also cause adverse mental health problems for students.
>
> Student, 18 years old, Kent, Mainstream school.

> Student, 15 years old, London, Mainstream school
>
> Instead of banning phones we should teach kids how to use it in a better way so they learn how to actually use it in real life.

Recommendations

1. Implications for policy and practice

We advocate for a three-pillar harm reduction approach to digital devices and media:

1. Harm reduction approach,
2. Trauma and victim informed approach, and
3. Child rights approach

2. Moving from prohibition to guided engagement at school

Recommendation	Activation
Schools should prioritise developing students' capacity to manage digital technologies responsibly rather than relying primarily on bans.	Blanket bans remove opportunities for students to practise self-regulation and develop healthy digital habits within supported environments. As a result, when restrictions are lifted, young people are expected to manage complex digital environments without having had opportunities to learn these skills within safe spaces offered by the education system.
Digital literacy education should move beyond technical skills to include ethical, relational, and political dimensions of digital life.	Students in this study demonstrated awareness of issues such as consent, image-based abuse, and online harassment, yet these were often addressed through disciplinary policies rather than sustained educational engagement. Digital literacy education should therefore include discussion of consent, gender and power, responsible sharing, bystander intervention, and privacy.
Educational approaches should also include discussion of the economic and technological systems that shape digital platforms.	Many platforms operate within attention-based business models designed to maximise engagement, meaning that concerns about excessive phone use cannot be understood solely as issues of individual self-control but must be situated within broader technological structures. Supporting critical engagement, rather than total prohibition, allows young people to navigate these environments more effectively.

Recommendation	Activation
In implementing a smartphone policy, schools should prioritise trust, autonomy, and participation.	By anchoring policy in young people's rights—specifically the right to information, participation, and privacy under the UNCRC—schools can treat students as active rights-holders and participants in building competencies for policy to instil higher thresholds of safety for all. Integrating youth voice into the design process ensures that rules are grounded in the lived experiences of students, fostering a sense of ownership and legitimacy that top-down mandates can be perceived to lack.

This collaborative approach doesn't sacrifice safety; instead, it strengthens it by transforming the school into a 'practice ground' where students learn to navigate digital risks under guidance, ensuring everyone has access to safe spaces for support and help. Ultimately, such a policy prioritises a student's future by building the digital citizenship and critical discernment they will need long after they leave the school gates.

3. Addressing the displacement effect: Developing an extended responsibility framework?

Parents' and teacher's concerns about digital risk are legitimate, and this report takes them seriously. However, our findings suggest that protection is most effective when it is combined with trust, dialogue, and opportunities for young people to develop digital responsibility. A protectionist approach alone, one driven by fear rather than understanding, risks overlooking the complex roles that digital technologies already play in young people's lives. Protection must be balanced with children's rights, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989).

a

Have app-specific, not generic, conversations about digital life.

Digital literacy needs to be part of everyday life in the home environment, given that technology is mediating many aspects of family life, from voice assistants (such as Siri and Alexa) to personal device use. Recent parental media guidance from the UK government suggests a need to normalise frequent conversations about online content, rather than reacting only when problems arise. While this advice is sensible, it needs to be much more targeted. Our study shows that apps with recommender algorithms (Roblox, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat) are all used in different ways and serve different functions in young people's lives.

b

Balance protection with young people's right to participate in digital decisions.

Parents and carers should involve young people in conversations about digital rules, rather than treating them only as subjects of protection. A children's rights approach, grounded in the UNCRC and the concept of 'evolving capacities' (Livingstone and Sylwander, 2025), recognises that young people need both protection from harm and opportunities to develop autonomy. The Australian Government Manifesto For A Better Children's Internet (Dezuanni et al., 2023) reinforces this point, noting that children and families are co-creators of the digital environments they inhabit, and that developing media literacy together is essential for navigating them successfully. Parents are central to this: listening to children, believing their accounts of digital experience, and acting on what they share.

c

Provide meaningful offline alternatives before restricting screen time.

Our findings show that limiting screen time without offering viable alternatives can lead to frustration, boredom, and social disconnection rather than healthier habits. Before reducing a young person's screen time, parents should consider what will replace it. Without meaningful alternatives, screen time restrictions risk creating a vacuum that neither promotes wellbeing nor addresses the underlying reasons young people turn to digital platforms. Of course, not all parents have the time or money to provide meaningful, engaging, offline alternatives for their children. In these cases, it should be the role of government to fill the gap and provide subsidized before and after school activities.

d

Understand that smartphones serve safety and emotional regulation functions.

Many young people in this study described smartphones not as luxuries but as tools for managing their safety and emotional wellbeing. Students reported needing to contact parents during moments of distress, including panic attacks, family health emergencies, and fears around personal safety while travelling. Parents should recognise that removing or heavily restricting phone access — whether at school or at home — can heighten anxiety rather than reduce it. Rather than framing phone use exclusively as a source of risk, parents can work with their children to establish how and when phones serve important protective functions, and factor this into any household rules about device use.

e

Co-create household digital rules with your children rather than imposing them unilaterally.

Our Parental regulation tasks revealed that young people often understand the purpose behind household rules about phone use but feel frustrated when rules are applied rigidly without room for negotiation or context. Students described feeling 'sad' and 'annoyed' when devices were taken away at moments that felt arbitrary, such as midway through a social gaming session with friends. Involving children in setting digital boundaries, discussing why certain limits exist, agreeing on exceptions, and reviewing rules together as they mature, is more likely to produce genuine buy-in and develop the self-regulation skills that will be essential once parental oversight diminishes. This mirrors the collaborative approaches recommended for schools in the preceding section and aligns with the UNCRC principle of evolving capacities.

f

Be aware of the 'catch-up' effect of school phone bans.

Our study found evidence that school smartphone bans may intensify home-based screen time. Several students described spending extended hours on their phones each evening, some until 1:00 am, in what appeared to be compensatory behaviour after a full day without access. Parents should be aware that a school's phone ban does not automatically reduce overall screen time; in some cases, it may displace and concentrate digital engagement into the home environment. This means that parents, rather than assuming the school ban has 'solved' the problem, may need to be more actively involved in supporting balanced digital habits at home — not through additional prohibition, but through conversation, structure, and the provision of meaningful alternatives.

g

Engage actively with school digital use policies rather than deferring to them.

Parents should not assume that a school's ban constitutes a comprehensive approach to their child's digital wellbeing. Instead, parents can engage with school's policy development processes, participate in consultation exercises when offered, and advocate for approaches that support digital competence rather than relying solely on device removal. Schools have more time and structured opportunities to work interactively with young people on digital issues than most families do at home, but this works best when parents are informed participants in shaping those policies, not passive recipients.

4. Policy Redirection - Focus on platforms, behaviours, and emerging technologies

Policies should shift from device-focused bans toward platform-specific safeguarding approaches. Different forms of harm occur across different digital environments. Addressing these issues requires attention to the specific affordances of different platforms – including social media, messaging apps, and increasingly, AI systems – and how different students interact with them in different ways.

Emerging research (including in this report) is highlighting that AI tools such as ChatGPT are already embedded in students' everyday learning practices, often encouraged by teachers while simultaneously subject to restriction or uncertainty at the institutional level. This creates a contradictory policy landscape in which some forms of technology are promoted while others are prohibited, despite operating through the same devices and infrastructures.

We suggest it is therefore important to explicitly address how AI relates to wider technology use and smartphone policies in schools. Without this clarity, safeguarding approaches risk becoming inconsistent – focusing on devices rather than the behaviours, interactions, and platform dynamics through which both harms and benefits actually emerge. By focusing on behaviours and digital contexts rather than simply banning devices, schools can better address the conditions in which online harms occur, while also supporting students to engage critically and responsibly with the full range of technologies shaping their lives.

5. Implementing a Student Centred 'Digital Use Policy' Framework

We've designed with Life Lessons a Student-Centred Digital Use Policy Framework, which can be implemented in order to build a conscientious and contextualised digital use policy, placing student voice at the heart of the development process.

Integrating at least one of the elements will have positive impact on community engagement (Hajidah, 2004) and intended outcomes. Implementing actions from across all 4 elements will support you delivering a policy that is relational and prioritises student experience and safety.

Element 1: Collaborative Consulation

Explore the digital context of your community and engage students, staff and parents as active stakeholders, avoiding tokenistic methods (Al-Thani, 2025).
Suggested actions:

- Ask students, parents and teachers to complete surveys covering their opinions and understanding, auditing anxieties and enthusiasm on digital use and safety.
- Invite individuals to be part of policy working groups.
- Analyse and reflect on the survey outcomes - sense checking the conclusions and determining if there are further questions.
- Build a proposed policy that addresses the anxieties and enthusiasms of all stakeholders.
- Ensure community-wide clarity around the intended impact of any policy, and that the measures built into it align with delivering this impact.
- Circulate policy for consultation, with transparent methods for feedback.

Element 2: Building competency and understanding

The RSE Statutory Guidance and the Computing National Curriculum requires schools to teach about online harms, digital wellbeing and digital safety, but you may want to go deeper with the skills young people will need to be critical and positive users of technology.
Suggested actions:

- Audit your curriculum to ensure you are covering the statutory and national content.
- Engage with ongoing research and evidence on digital citizenship, digital literacy and AI competency (Estellés & Doyle, 2025)
- Informed by the survey data, determine which skills young people need to achieve their hopes and wants. Note: critical thinking is key in the Education White Paper.
- Research different skills curriculums and digital readiness programmes to identify and that meet your needs, or use the evidence base to build your own.
- Provide staff with training in strategies and pedagogy around digital wellbeing and safety.
- Engage pupil voice regularly and openly (Macauley et al, 2022) - see Element 4 for more detail.

Element 3: Clarity on expectations

Clear boundaries provide psychological safety. Ambiguity can be where conflict and break down in relationships arise between students, staff and parents.

Suggested actions:

- Ensure the expectations for digital use are really clear for all stakeholders, with explicit consideration for vulnerable and SEND students, and facilitating objectivity for application and implementation (Bernier, 2022).
  - For example, are you permitting digital devices to be used as education tools in certain lessons (perhaps for research, or as a revision tool) - in which case how are these exceptions articulated and clearly defined?
- Share the intended impact for boundaries - for example wanting to improve engagement in enrichment, or higher social interaction, and provide opportunity for co-design for measure to achieve these outcomes (Schimmel, 2003) .
- If your phone use policy and behaviour policy interact, ensure the consequences of not meeting expectations are proportionate, purposeful and consistent (Jones et al, 2023).
  - Are you taking a relational, agency-led approach: exploring the reason for not meeting expectation, and providing opportunity to consider the impact of the behaviour?
  - Are you including a staged approach and building a relational culture of 'assumed good intent'?

Element 4: Regular, active review

Technology often moves faster than policy, curriculum, and adults. A static policy can quickly lose it's impact, and rigid, unresponsive approaches can feel oppressive and irrelevant to young people (Thornberg, 2008).

Suggested actions:

- Set reasonable time frames for regular, compulsory review.
- Determine who needs to be involved in review. Youth voice should be key here.
  - This could involve reconvening your policy working groups from Element 1.
  - This could be by establishing digital ambassadors or enlisting your youth council to feedback on student body experiences and suggestions.
- Regularly collect evidence of stakeholder experience and impact.
- Review impact data. Has the policy had the impact you desired it to? Examine how your data informs you about this and if stakeholder engagement reflects the data.
- Include a review of curriculum content.
  - Is there anything students want to learn more about?
  - Is there anything staff do not feel confident teaching?
- Determine if there are any actions or changes that need to be made, communicate these clearly, with time for adaptation.
- Build in regular and systematic youth voice engagement to ensure young people know there are open lines of communication around risks, harms, opportunities and competencies.

References

Al-Thani, G. (2025). Beyond consultation: Rethinking stakeholder engagement in Qatar's public education policymaking. Education Sciences, 15(6), 769. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15060769

Bernier, V., Gaudreau, N., & Massé, L. (2022). Teachers' attitudes in classroom management as perceived by pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 27(1), 58–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2022.2058561

Department for Education. (2026a). Behaviour in schools. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2

Department for Education. (2026b, February 19). Government to drive action to improve children's relationship with mobile phones and social media. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-drive-action-to-improve-childrens-relationship-with-mobile-phones-and-social-media

Department for Education. (2026c). Mobile phones in schools. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools

Dezuanni, M., Notley, T., Third, A., & Bullen, P. (n.d.). Manifesto for a better children's internet. https://digitalchild.org.au/research/publications/working-paper/manifesto-for-a-better-childrens-internet/

Estellés, M., & Doyle, A. (2025). From safeguarding to critical digital citizenship? A systematic review of approaches to online safety education. Review of Education, 13, e70056. https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.70056

Goodyear, V. A., Randhawa, A., Adab, P., Al-Janabi, H., Fenton, S., Jones, K., Michail, M., Morrison, B., Patterson, P., Quinlan, J., Sitch, A., Twardochleb, R., Wade, M., & Pallan, M. (2025). School phone policies and their association with mental wellbeing, phone use, and social media use (SMART Schools): A cross-sectional observational study. The Lancet Regional Health – Europe. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanepe.2025.101211

Hadijah, N. (2024). Stakeholder engagement in educational policy development. Eurasian Experiment Journal of Arts and Management, 6(1), 17–20. https://smartie.kiu.ac.ug/public/assets/publications/1d66f185f699880579acad97ec6305c4c0b49a8c0b49a8c.pdf

Hunt, A., Baron, J. E., Dee, T., Duckworth, A. L., Gentzkow, M., & Jacob, B. (2026). The effects of school phone bans: National evidence from lockable pouches (Working Paper 35132). National Bureau of Economic Research. http://www.nber.org/papers/w35132

Jones, R., Kreppner, J., Marsh, F., & Hartwell, B. (2023). Punitive behaviour management policies and practices in secondary schools: A systematic review of children and young people's perceptions and experiences. Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 28(2–3), 182–197. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2023.2255403

Livingstone, S., & Sylwander, K. R. (2025). There is no right age! The search for age-appropriate ways to support children's digital lives and rights. Journal of Children and Media, 19(1), 6–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2024.2435015

Macauley, T., Rolker, H. B., Scherer, M., Brock, J., Savona, N., Helleve, A., & Knai, C. (2022). Youth participation in policy-making processes in the United Kingdom: A scoping review of the literature. Journal of Community Practice, 30(2), 203–224. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2022.2073308

Rahali, M., Livingstone, S., & Kidron, B. (2025). Mobile phone restrictions in UK schools, one year on. Media@LSE. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/medialse/2025/02/19/mobile-phone-restrictions-in-uk-schools-one-year-on/

Schimmel, D. M. (2003). Collaborative rule-making and citizenship education: An antidote to the undemocratic hidden curriculum. American Secondary Education, 31(3), 16–35. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41064494

Thornberg, R. (2008). 'It's not fair!'—Voicing pupils' criticisms of school rules. Children & Society, 22, 418–428. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2007.00121.x

United Nations. (1989, November 20). Convention on the Rights of the Child. United Nations. https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child