



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mobile phones in schools

Draft guidance to help schools make clear and fair rules



Contents

About this guide.....	3
Why schools need rules about mobile phones.....	4
Who this draft guide is for.....	6
What schools should do	7
Different ways schools can limit the use of mobile phones	8
Things schools should think about.....	11
Making the policy	13
Putting the policy into practice	14
Roles and responsibilities	15
Reviewing the policy.....	16
Using mobile phones safely and responsibly	17

About this guide

We are the Welsh Government. This is a Youth Friendly version of our draft guidance about using mobile phones in schools in Wales.

We want schools to limit mobile phone use during the school day.

We want to know what you think.

Please read this draft guide. Then send us your views using the response form.

Where the document says we, it means Welsh Government. For more information contact:

Website: www.gov.wales

E-mail: CMIA.SATE@gov.wales



Why schools need rules about mobile phones

Mobile phones can be useful, but they can also cause problems in schools.

For example, mobile phones can:

- Be distracting.
- Make bullying worse.
- Impact mental health.
- Impact what you achieve at school.
- Affect your sleep and your energy levels in school.
- Lower the amount of physical activity you do.



However, we know digital technology is important when it is used in the right way. Mobile phones can:

- Help keep you safe.
- Help you manage your medical needs.
- Be used as a tool for learning.

When schools make mobile phone rules, they need to think about all these things.



Who this draft guidance is for

This draft guidance is mainly for schools and education organisations.

This includes:

- Local authorities.
- School governors.
- School leaders.
- Pupil Referral Units.
- Independent schools.

Parents, carers, and learners should also be told what the school rules are.



What schools should do

Every school in Wales should have its own mobile phone policy. A policy is a written set of rules.

The policy should help to:

- Keep learners safe.
- Support learning.
- Support wellbeing.
- Reduce bullying.
- Make rules clear for everyone.
- Make sure learners are treated fairly.

Different ways schools can limit the use of mobile phones

Schools should choose the approach that works best for their learners.



Options

No mobile phones at school

This is a clear and easy way to manage the use of mobile phones.

But it may make emergency contact harder.

Schools would need to think about learners who use their mobile phones to manage medical conditions like diabetes.

Asking learners to hand in their mobile phones when they arrive at school

This means learners can use mobile phones before and after school.

It would take away the distraction in classrooms and be an easy way to limit the use of mobile phones.

This can take a lot of time to sort out. Schools would need their staff to manage this and make sure there's a safe place to store phones. There could be a risk of loss or damage.

Keeping mobile phones in lockers or a safe place

Mobile phones are kept in a safe place until the end of the day.

Learners could use their mobile phones when travelling to and from school.

This would cost the school staff time and money.

Never used, never heard

Learners keep mobile phones with them, but they must never be used or heard.

There must be consequences for learners who use their mobile phones in school.

This is hard to monitor. Mobile phones could be misused.

Mobile phones used in certain places or at certain times

This could work well for older learners.

This is hard to monitor. Mobile phones could be misused.

Things schools should think about

- Age of learners. Younger learners may need stricter controls.
- Safety risks such as viewing harmful content and bullying.
- The effect mobile phones have on learning.
- Learner needs such as medical needs and additional learning needs.
- Learners who do not have mobile phones.
- Young carers and children who are looked after.
- Travel to and from school.
- School trips.
- How mobile phones may be used safely for learning.

No learner should be unfairly disadvantaged by the school's mobile phone policy.

Schools should have a clear way for parents or carers to ask for an exception, for example, if a learner needs their mobile phone for medical reasons.

- Exceptions should be agreed and written down.
- Staff should know how to support the learner.
- Exceptions should be handled sensitively.



Making the policy

Schools should explain why the policy is needed and how it will be good for learners.

They should:

- Look at evidence. Check what works and what is needed.
- Listen to learners, staff, parents, carers and governors.
- Think about their duties for keeping people safe, treating people fairly and keeping information safe.
- Link the policy to behaviour and wellbeing policies.

Schools can ask people what they think using surveys, meetings, focus groups or school councils.

Putting the policy into practice

Schools should introduce the policy clearly, so everyone understands the rules.

They can use things like posters, social media, or meetings to tell people about the policy.

Schools may introduce the rules over time so learners can get used to them.

They should explain what will happen if someone breaks the rules. Consequences should be clear, fair, and appropriate.

For example, a school might:

- Give a warning.
- Take the mobile phone for a short time.
- Speak with the learner.
- Give detentions.
- Contact parents or carers.
- Record what happened.



Roles and responsibilities

School leaders and governors

School leaders and governors should make sure the policy is clear, fair and reviewed regularly. This means checking if they are working or need changing.

Staff

Staff should follow the policy and help learners understand the rules.

Learners

Learners should follow the rules and use technology safely and responsibly.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers should support the school policy and avoid contacting learners during lessons unless it is an emergency.



Reviewing the policy



Schools should check if the policy is working.

They should review it regularly, for example once a year.

Schools can look at:

- Behaviour information.
- Attendance.
- Wellbeing surveys.
- Feedback from learners, staff, parents and carers.
- How often mobile phones cause problems.

Using mobile phones safely and responsibly

Schools should also teach learners how to use technology safely.

This includes learning about:

- Screen time.
- Privacy settings.
- Keeping personal information safe.
- Cyberbullying.
- Respectful online communication.
- Balancing online and offline time.

Mobile phone rules should help schools be safe, calm, and focused places to learn.

The rules should protect learning and wellbeing.

The rules should also make sure learners are treated fairly.

[Easy Read Wales](#) made this youth friendly document.
[Please complete our online form to tell us what you think.](#)

