

## Situation

During school time, we are seeing first-hand the negative impact of smartphones and social media on our young people's wellbeing and education. As a school we already instigated a phone ban approach in June 2024 for the S1s commencing at JGHS. Teachers reported fewer adverse incidents related to mobile phone use during school time and better concentration.

This prompted us, as a school, to consider revising our approach to mobiles phones for the rest of the school years.

## Background

UNESCO Global Monitoring Report on Technology in Education, 2023

- **Mere proximity** to a mobile device was found to **distract students** and to have a negative impact on learning in 14 countries
- The use of smartphones in classrooms leads to students engaging in **non-school-related activities**, which affects recall and comprehension (Kates et al., 2018).
- A study found that it can take students up to **20 minutes to refocus** on what they were learning after engaging in a non-academic activity (Carrier et al., 2015; Dontre, 2021).
- **Negative effects** are also reported in students from the use of personal computers for non-academic activities during class, such as **internet browsing, and in their peers** who are in view of the screen (Hall et al., 2020).
- The use of **social media** in the classroom is also disruptive, increasing academic **distraction with negative effects on learning outcomes** (Dontre, 2021).
- Analysis of PISA data between 2009 and 2018 showed a **negative correlation** between the use of social media in school and digital **reading performance** (Hu and Yu, 2021).

Scottish Government Advice and Guidance, 2024

- 'There is a growing body of [evidence](#) to suggest that over-exposure to mobile phone use can result in limited concentration, unhappiness and isolation. Further, the recently published [Programme of International Student Assessment \(PISA\) 2022](#) data, published in December 2023, showed that **almost a third of 15 year olds in Scotland and across all OECD countries reported being distracted using digital devices in most or every maths class** – and around a quarter reported being distracted by others using digital devices.'
- **'Mobile phone use impacts on learning and teaching.** Within this context it is important that Scotland's headteachers are empowered to act in the best interests of their pupils, to support our hard-working teachers to ensure a consistent learning environment is provided to all pupils in our classrooms.'
- 'That means empowering headteachers to take the steps they see fit to limit the use of mobile phones in our schools, **up to and including a full ban on the school estate during the school day**, if that is their judgement.'
- 'I am clear in publishing this guidance that, as Cabinet Secretary, I will support any headteacher who decides to institute a ban on mobile phones in their school.'

## Assessment

As a school, we have a duty to care for pupils' wellbeing during school hours and to maximise conditions for effective learning. Given the above situation and background, on balance, we think we will best achieve these responsibilities by extending the phone ban approach already instigated for the lower years to cover all years and in a more structured way. This proposal was discussed with teachers at the INSET day in May 2025 and received strong support. We appreciate everyone's support regarding this approach.

## Recommendation for the new mobile phone policy

1. We are seeing first-hand the negative impact of smartphones and social media on our children's wellbeing and education, and **so pupils should not bring a phone to school**. This will allow pupils to engage fully in their educational and social learning.
2. However, we understand that some pupils require a phone to support travel to and from school, given the large geographical area of our catchment. In this situation, we would kindly ask for the support of parents and carers to reinforce with their child that their phone should be **switched off and completely inaccessible** for the entire duration of the school day (08.40 – 15.40). This includes during breaktimes and when off school premises. Lockable 'Yondr' pouches will be available for parents to buy at a cost of £10-£20 to store phones ensuring any phones brought to school are inaccessible. Further information will follow regarding this.
3. All pupils have iPads which negates the need for personal mobile devices for educational purposes. In certain lessons where technology is integrated into the learning activity, teachers will clearly communicate guidelines for appropriate use of iPads only.
4. Any child needing their phone for medical reasons please contact your child's Pupil Support Leader (PSL) via the school office beforehand.
5. **Emergency and unplanned communication:** If a student needs to contact parents/carers during school hours, students should alert a teacher. Any contact with parents/carers should always be made through the school office and school staff. The number to call is [0131 447 1900](tel:01314471900)
6. If a student is found with a phone during the school day, this will result in confiscation of the device until the end of the school day. The device can be collected, after the school day has finished, by the student's parent/carer.
7. This policy includes all mobile devices (e.g. smart watches)