



Department for Education facts and figures published in support of the changes – February 2026

Phone Free SWRA

Research from the Children’s Commissioner shows that the overwhelming majority of schools – 99.8% of primary schools and 90% of secondary schools – already have policies in place that limit or restrict the use of mobile phones during the school day.

According to The National Behaviour Survey (2024 to 2025), 58% of secondary school pupils (rising to 65% for key stage 4 pupils) reported mobile phones being used without permission in at least some lessons. This not only distracts the single pupil using the phone, but disrupts the lesson for a whole class, and diverts teachers’ efforts away from learning.

Parents can play an important role in supporting the school in effectively implementing its policy on mobile phones and eliminating this form of distraction for pupils in lessons.

Mobile phones have already been prohibited or restricted in schools in one in four countries worldwide, including France, The Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, Saudi Arabia and Singapore. It may be helpful, when setting out a new position to parents, to explain that restrictions on the use of mobile phones is not unique to schools in England.

Screen time can displace positive activities. Socialising, exercise, and good sleep are positive influences on wellbeing. All these can be displaced by screen time. By prohibiting the use of mobile phones during the school day, including break and lunchtimes at school as well as in lessons, more time for socialising and exercise can be created supporting children’s friendships and interactions with peers. Parents should be encouraged to consider the impact screen time has on their child’s sleep and work together with schools to promote children’s wellbeing.

One in five children has experienced bullying online. Data from Ofcom (2025) suggests that over 3 in 10 children (31%) aged 8 to 17 have experienced somebody being “nasty or hurtful” towards them via communications technology.

The likelihood of this increases with age, and girls are more likely than boys to experience this type of behaviour. Children are as likely to experience someone being “nasty or hurtful” to them through social media (16%) as face-to-face (15%).

In addition, 31% of children aged 8 to 9 have seen something “worrying or nasty” online, but only 65% of children aged 8 to 9 would “always tell someone.”

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