

26 January 2026



We are the department for **opportunity**

Dear colleagues,

As school leaders, you see first-hand the impact technology is having on children's learning, behaviour and wellbeing. You also play a vital role in setting the boundaries that help pupils to focus, feel safe and succeed. I am grateful for the leadership you show every day in meeting these challenges. I want to give you backing and clarity on this that helps you hold those boundaries, including as you work through these questions with parents and communities.

I have always been clear that mobile phones have no place in schools - I know many of you feel the same. But it is clear that the previous guidance did not deliver the clarity or consistency that schools need, or help enough in setting out for parents that this is a clear national position. That is why we have strengthened it to be explicit - all schools should be phone-free environments for the entire school day. That includes lessons, time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. It means, for example, it is not appropriate for phones to be used as calculators, or for research during lessons.

This guidance is intended to remove ambiguity and support firm, confident leadership. Schools should not only have clear policies, but should make sure those policies are applied consistently across classes and at all times, and we want parents to back these policies too. This is a clear national reset on mobile phone use in schools.

To reinforce the importance of implementation, Ofsted will, for the first time, examine both schools' mobile phone policies and how effectively they are applied when judging behaviour during inspections.

We recognise that embedding change takes time and effort. Attendance and Behaviour Hub lead schools — all of which already operate effective phone-free approaches — will support schools that would benefit from additional help. These schools have worked with us to develop practical, evidence-based guidance that can be adapted to different settings.

You have my full support in taking this forward. Clear boundaries, applied with consistency and fairness, give pupils the best chance to learn and thrive, and schools should feel confident in setting and enforcing them.

As you will have seen, we are also taking wider action to improve children's relationship with technology and social media – at home, not just at school. The Government will shortly launch a consultation on children's use of technology as part of a national conversation, and I strongly encourage you to contribute your professional insight.

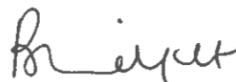
I look forward to working with you as we ensure that technology supports children and young people's education and wellbeing, rather than distracting from it.

Sincerely,

Bridget Phillipson

Secretary of State for Education

Yours sincerely,



Bridget Phillipson

Secretary of State for Education

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