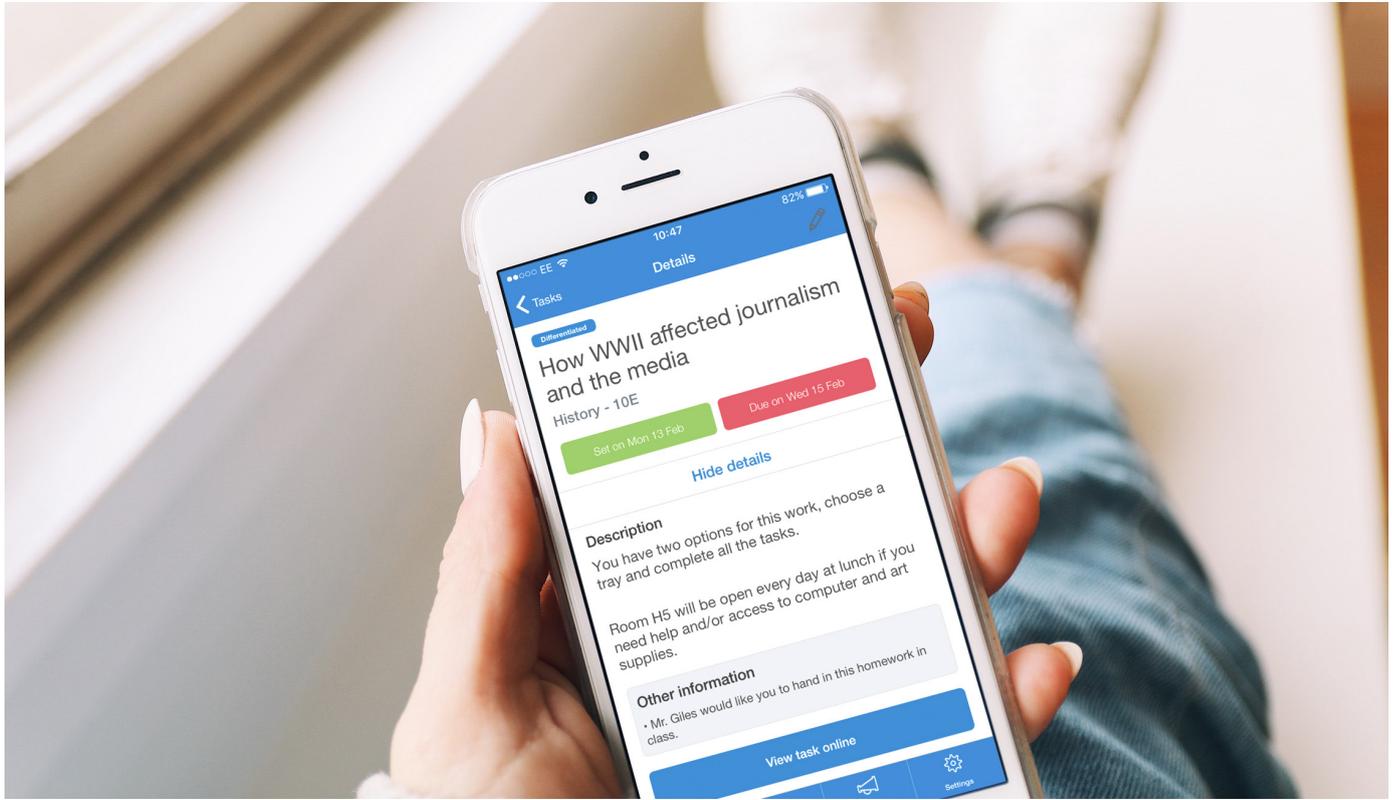


# Creating a Mobile Phone Policy in School



We understand that introducing a Mobile Phone Policy is definitely not 'one size fits all' - but what should you consider when deciding how far your technology adoption will go?

## Understanding your school's technology needs

### Internet Accessibility

When it comes to internet use there's a fine line between embracing technology and excluding students. However, internet access has been growing exponentially and schools are equipped with homework clubs to be inclusive for the few without access. Before deciding how much you wish to embrace mobile phones into the school, find out about the level of access your students have. If you don't already have this information, you can ask your students via a questionnaire.

### Sample questionnaire:

- Do you have access at home to the internet?
- Do you have access to your own mobile phone?
- Is your mobile phone internet enabled?
- Do you have sufficient storage to download apps to be used in class?

It's easy to forget that whilst most of your staff will have a phone and contract that provides a lot of storage and data, not all students will.

## Behaviour in your school

Behaviour is a vital consideration before changing your technology policy. Introducing technology into your classroom and teaching can be a big leap for many schools who currently have a stricter technology and mobile policy. However, with clear expectations set, it is possible to find the balance.

## Familiarity with technology

Has your school already adopted multiple technologies and softwares which are used either in class or for homework? Are students already allowed to have and use mobile phones in their breaks at school? Have you tried a BYOD lesson?

Understanding your school's current exposure to technology can be useful when looking into other areas you may introduce technology or mobile learning without affecting students' outcomes. The key is to define where on the technology adoption scale your school best fits.

The below examples of adoption can help you build your own mobile policy in school.

## Find the level of adoption you're comfortable with

Today, students are fully immersed in technology, and innovations in tech have successfully filtered into businesses near and far. The prevalence of technology everywhere today, highlights just how important it is to fully understand how to use basic tech and also how dependent on it we are as a society. This has been reflected in schools through the introduction of Digital Literacy Learning Groups and is why when creating your Mobile Phone Policy, you need to bear in mind that in order to be reflective of everyday life, it needs to take into the consideration the unlikelihood of mobile phones ever be absent.

Consider the examples of low, medium and high technology adoption in schools below to help shape your school's Mobile Phone Policy.

### Low Adoption

Low technology adoption is applicable to those schools who understand the need for students to be contactable throughout the school day and accept that technology is now a part of children's everyday life, but don't want to promote the use of technology within school. Having the ability to communicate with parents and those outside of school in case of emergencies is important, and something teachers and parents value highly, however in low adoption schools, mobile phones should be used solely for these purposes.

To ensure students abide by your no-phones policy in class and distractions are kept to a minimum, at the start of class have students place mobile phones in a basket at the front of the class, but trust they will use the phones in a reasonable way outside of class.

In order to integrate more technology into your low adoption without encroaching on class time, why not try introducing at-home tech activities to be carried out with parental supervision. By introducing the use of technology with students' home-learning there will be no impact on your school's current teaching and learning practices, however students get to use technology to enhance their learning at home.

### Medium Adoption

Increased technology adoption would follow much of the above, but schools may be more lenient on use of mobile phones when not a distraction during classes. An example of this, would be schools who integrate the use of smart devices in their lesson plans under supervision, who use timetables for students and teachers, and allow sensible use during lunch and break times.

Within class, students would be held responsible for their own mobile, this will allow them to keep their phone with them, however - it would have to remain out of sight and on silent. If students are caught on their phone, or it goes off during class, time it would then be confiscated (a sanction policy with regards to mobiles would be subject to the school).



A 'medium adoption' policy would help support the use of apps that help students to organise their school life, for example allowing students to use timetabling apps to get them from lesson to lesson on time, something which will help their organisation and promote the use of practical tech within the school.

In an attempt to further integrate technology into the day-to-day of school life, scheduled BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) lessons could be introduced. These would allow students to use devices within the classroom, but within the parameters you set. It's also good practice for life after school where smart technology is fully integrated, and the use of apps would also expose them to greater learning opportunities than previously offered.

As with any technological device being used within school, there is the risk of distractions. So long as your school has a strict sanctions policy in place, these can be avoided as best they can and with stringent internet restrictions, you can avoid students veering away from the intended use and outcomes of a BYOD class.

## High Adoption

A higher adoption mobile phone policy would be fully accepting of students' relationships with their mobile phones and understand these are in fact a part of everyday life and learning. This would mean students would be allowed their mobiles freely outside of lesson time, but face-to-face interactions would be strongly encouraged, strict rules around appropriate use should be in place so that technology can be integrated into lesson plans to keep students engaged.

High adoption schools could introduce iPads into lessons, this would help to bridge the ways in which students interact with learning between home and school. In order to avoid distractions within these classes, lesson plans should be planned intricately in advance with all iPads being closely monitored and app downloads and parental safety settings tracked.

## Ground rules for your Mobile Phone Policy

Any level of mobile phone use in schools, whether that's for emergency and at-home use only or for schools who fully support BYOD lessons should be monitored closely and only operate within the parameters of acceptable / appropriate use.

We've highlighted some of the areas you should consider for your Mobile Phone Policy to help achieve appropriate use.

### Staff:

- Phones, if/when not in use for teaching and learning opportunities, to only be used in staff's free time, and never in front of students unless in case of emergency.
- Phones must be kept on silent at all times.
- Staff will not contact a child from their own personal mobile; this should only be done via a school telephone. Expectations for this rule may only apply when students are on a school trip in which case teachers may need to contact students outside of school premises.
- Staff will not take photos of children on a mobile - school devices can be used for this with explicit consent.
- Staff will never send nor accept inappropriate messages or images from other staff, students or parents.

### Parents:

- Parents will not take photos of children on the school premises for safeguarding reasons.
- Images of children will not be posted online on social media without explicit consent.
- Parents must understand that contacting children during school hours can be a distraction and if possible, to wait until break and lunch do so, unless during an emergency.



## Students:

- During school hours the following uses for a mobile phone are unacceptable: SMS, Calls, Internet, Social media, photos, photo sharing, bullying, file sharing.
- Students are reminded that mobile phone bullying, intimidation or any content of a violent or sexual nature may be a criminal offence and is often traceable by the police.
- Use of mobile phones in changing rooms is forbidden.
- Students are not allowed to take photos of staff.
- Students must keep mobile phones on silent and in their bag, or leave mobile phones at the front of the classroom where necessary.
- When directed to use mobile phones for learning purposes, students must adhere to rules set by teachers to prevent distractions and impact to learning.
- Students must adhere to the school's strict sanction policy and confiscation terms for inappropriate use of mobile phones.

