# Labour MP revises smartphone ban proposal for schools



The initiative to ban smartphones in schools, led by Labour MP Josh MacAlister for Whitehaven and Workington, has seen significant modifications as he seeks government backing for a revised approach. MacAlister, speaking to BBC News, admitted to “watering down” his proposals to focus on areas that might garner government support, stating he aims to create “practical measures” that lead to tangible actions in this issue.

Originally, MacAlister's bill, introduced in October 2023, aimed to enforce a complete ban on smartphones in educational institutions and to prohibit addictive social media algorithms. However, due to a lack of governmental interest in such restrictions, these proposals have been abandoned. Instead, the latest iteration of the bill, which is set for its second reading in the House of Commons on Friday, proposes further research into the impacts of smartphones and social media on children, as well as the development of guidance for parents regarding their children’s smartphone usage.

In its original form, the legislation suggested several stringent measures, including the establishment of mobile-free zones in all schools, a rise in the age at which companies could obtain data consent from children—from 13 to 16 years old—and enhanced regulatory powers for Ofcom to prevent children from accessing platforms designed to be addictive. Most of these proposals have now been dropped.

The revised bill instead focuses on:

MacAlister expressed optimism about the bill's revised direction, believing it can lead to significant progress in addressing these concerns about mobile device use among young people. The conversation around smartphone restrictions has gained traction recently, with several educational institutions re-evaluating their policies on mobile phones and parent groups advocating for a delay in smartphone availability for children. However, some argue that smartphones can contribute positively to child development by facilitating social interactions, and there is insufficient evidence to support a blanket ban on devices in schools.

Overall, this development in the legislative process highlights the ongoing debate around children, technology, and education in the UK.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.pandasecurity.com/en/mediacenter/uk-government-ban-smartphones-in-schools/> - This article discusses Josh MacAlister's original proposal to ban smartphones in schools and the challenges his bill faces, including the lack of government support for a blanket ban.
* <https://news.sky.com/story/school-smartphone-ban-will-not-become-law-after-mp-drops-proposal-sky-news-understands-13245379> - This article reports on the dropping of the smartphone ban proposal from MacAlister's bill due to government refusal to support it, highlighting the shift towards other aspects of the bill.
* <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/mobile-phones-in-schools-mandating-a-ban/> - This document from the House of Lords Library provides context on the current situation regarding mobile phones in schools, including government policies and public opinions on the matter.
* <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/22/2024-07496/guidance-for-federal-financial-assistance> - Although not directly related to the UK's smartphone ban, this document illustrates how governments and regulatory bodies address technology and youth issues through policy guidance.
* <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/subtitle-A/part-18> - Similar to the previous entry, this document shows how regulatory frameworks are structured to address various issues, including those related to technology and youth.