# Education Secretary calls for smartphone ban in schools



At the annual conference of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) held on Friday in Liverpool, Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson stated that smartphones have “no place” in schools, expressing deep concerns regarding the adverse effects of social media and technology on student behaviour. Addressing an audience of approximately 1,000 school and college leaders, Phillipson conveyed the Government's complete support for initiatives aimed at eliminating disruptive mobile phone usage from classrooms.

Phillipson's remarks followed comments from Manny Botwe, the president of ASCL, who highlighted how smartphones and social media are increasingly being “weaponised” against schools, leading to a chaotic environment. Botwe called for a decisive end to the turmoil instigated by social media platforms and urged a more stringent approach to their regulation.

During her address, Phillipson emphasised the disruptive nature of mobile phones, stating, “You know, we all know, that phones are disruptive, distracting, bad for behaviour. They have no place in our schools.” She affirmed that the Government stands firmly behind educational institutions working to remove mobile phones from classrooms, asserting, “I know that will be the case in the overwhelming majority of all classrooms, but I expect it to be true in all classrooms.” As part of her strategy, Phillipson has tasked officials to investigate how to better monitor smartphone usage across schools in England.

The issue of mobile phone regulation has been under discussion since non-statutory guidance was issued by the previous Conservative government in February of last year, aimed at curbing mobile phone use during the school day. In remarks to the media during the conference, Phillipson noted that phone usage can be a significant contributor to poor behaviour within the classroom and urged school leaders to enforce the existing guidance regarding mobile phone policies.

Phillipson, reflecting on the Conservative policy, stated, “I think it was the right approach to take; what we need to ensure is that it’s being enforced right across the country, in every classroom.” She indicated that gathering more data on the enforcement of these policies is necessary to address any shortcomings effectively.

In response to questions about whether parents should impose tighter restrictions on mobile phone usage at home, the Education Secretary acknowledged the concerns many parents have regarding children accessing inappropriate online material. She remarked, “I know lots of parents are worried about access to inappropriate material online and what children can be exposed to. That’s why we are taking action through the Online Safety Act.” Phillipson added, “I think the evidence is increasingly clear that we shouldn’t be allowing children unrestricted access to harmful content,” emphasising a collaborative role for the government, parents, and schools.

During her speech, she also addressed the critical issue of student attendance, stating that while there have been improvements, persistent absenteeism remains a significant challenge. She chastised some schools for their lack of progress on attendance, insisting that they must “catch up fast” and could not accept the “damage” that prolonged absences can cause to children's education. Phillipson called for what she termed “old-fashioned graft” to tackle these issues and improve overall pupil attendance across schools in England.

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

## References

* <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/wellbeing-bridget-phillipson-education-secretary-conservative-party-university-of-birmingham-b1209183.html> - This article supports Bridget Phillipson's stance on mobile phones in schools, highlighting her agreement that phones should not be in lessons and her opposition to legislation as a solution. It also discusses the impact of phone bans on student behavior and mental health.
* <https://news.sky.com/story/politics-latest-bridget-phillipson-says-mobile-phones-have-no-place-in-schools-as-she-gives-full-backing-to-ban-12593360> - This article corroborates Phillipson's statement that smartphones have 'no place' in schools and her support for initiatives to eliminate disruptive phone use in classrooms.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides the original context for Bridget Phillipson's remarks at the ASCL conference, including her concerns about social media and technology's impact on student behavior.
* <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/wellbeing-bridget-phillipson-education-secretary-conservative-party-university-of-birmingham-b1209183.html> - This article also mentions the Conservative party's proposal to ban phones in classrooms, which Phillipson has criticized as a 'headline-grabbing gimmick'.
* <https://news.sky.com/story/politics-latest-bridget-phillipson-warns-education-leaders-that-more-difficult-decisions-are-coming-12593360> - This article provides additional context on Phillipson's speech in Liverpool, where she emphasized the need for decisive action on mobile phone usage and other educational challenges.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/online-safety-bill> - This URL would provide information on the Online Safety Act, which Phillipson mentioned as part of the government's efforts to protect children from harmful online content.
* <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/disruptive-phones-have-no-place-in-schools-education-secretary-says/a994576336.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data