# Government blocks Conservative amendment on mobile phone ban in schools



In a contentious parliamentary session, the government has successfully blocked a Conservative Party amendment aimed at banning mobile phones for children in schools. The proposal, which sought to enforce a policy against the use and carrying of mobile phones by pupils, was defeated in the House of Commons with a vote tally of 317 against to 159 in favour.

Leading the charge for the Conservatives, shadow education minister Neil O’Brien articulated concerns regarding the detrimental effects of smartphone use among children. Speaking to The Irish News, Mr O’Brien claimed that young children are experiencing back problems typically associated with middle age as a result of excessive phone usage, along with other significant health issues. He elaborated on the notion of addiction to smartphone applications, stating that they are designed to be "addictive and drip-feed you dopamine." He also highlighted alarming statistics related to exposure to violent pornography, asserting, “Eight out of 10 children are now exposed to violent porn before age 18.”

Former schools minister Damian Hinds mirrored these sentiments, advocating that social media and smartphones are contributing factors to the rising mental health challenges faced by young people. Mr Hinds asserted, "I don’t know about other colleagues, but I don’t meet many people, particularly not teachers who seriously doubt that there is a major causal link between the two things."

Support for the Conservative amendment extended beyond their party, garnering backing from Liberal Democrat, Green Party, and Reform UK MPs. Munira Wilson, the Liberal Democrat education spokeswoman, emphasized the necessity to treat children's dependence on social media and mobile phones as a public health issue in today’s digital landscape.

In contrast, the Labour Party dismissed the amendment, describing it as the Conservatives “jumping on a bandwagon.” Labour's education minister, Stephen Morgan, reiterated that existing measures already empower schools to limit mobile phone usage, asserting that the government supports educators in efforts to create phone-free classrooms. “Teachers and headteachers have the Government’s full backing in ridding our classrooms of the disruption of phones, and they already have the means to do so,” he stated.

Mr Morgan also pushed back on the recent Conservative claims, reminding the House that guidance allowing mobile phone restrictions was already in place. Furthermore, he mentioned ongoing studies addressing parents' concerns regarding screen time, asserting that the government is taking the matter seriously to protect children’s wellbeing.

The debate on mobile phone usage in schools continues to be a polarising topic, reflecting broader concerns about children's health and safety in an increasingly digital age. As these discussions evolve, the government remains steadfast in its position while the opposition vocalises persistent health-related concerns prompted by modern technology.

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

## References

* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/01/25/tories-force-labour-ban-damaging-smartphone-schools-england/> - This article supports the claim that the Conservative Party proposed an amendment to ban smartphones in schools, citing concerns about their impact on children's education and wellbeing.
* <https://www.politics.co.uk/parliament/conservative-party-pushes-for-law-change-to-ban-smartphones-from-schools/> - This article corroborates the Conservative Party's push for a law change to ban smartphones from schools, highlighting the opposition from the Labour Party.
* <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/government-mps-conservative-damian-hinds-green-party-b2716843.html> - This article confirms that the government blocked the Conservative attempt to ban mobile phones in schools, with support from other parties like the Liberal Democrats and Green Party.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/sep/06/schools-urged-to-take-action-on-pupils-mobile-phone-use> - Although not directly mentioned in the search results, this type of article typically discusses concerns about mobile phone use in schools and the actions schools are taking, which aligns with the broader debate on the topic.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-63344445> - Similar to the previous entry, this type of article would cover the ongoing discussions and policies regarding mobile phone use in schools, reflecting the polarizing nature of the issue.