# Education union chief calls for nationwide mobile phone ban in schools



An education union chief has called for a comprehensive ban on mobile phones in all schools across the United Kingdom, citing concerns over the impact of unrestricted access to digital content on young people. Daniel Kebede, the general secretary of the National Education Union (NEU), highlighted the issue of children accessing "hardcore pornography" via their mobile devices, which he believes is detrimental to the well-being of both boys and girls.

Speaking to the Press Association, Kebede expressed his strong support for a statutory ban on mobile phone usage in schools. He stated, “I think it would alleviate pressure from school leaders, teachers, but also parents.” His comments come in the wake of a significant survey that revealed that the majority of UK schools have implemented some form of policy regarding mobile phone use during school hours. This survey, involving over 15,000 schools, found that 90% of secondary schools and almost all primary schools enforce some restrictions.

The existing policies demonstrate a variety of approaches, ranging from keeping mobile devices out of sight to complete prohibitions during lessons and lunch breaks. Some schools even take the step of confiscating phones and returning them only at the end of the school day. Despite growing calls for a total ban, the government has refrained from enforcing such a measure, preferring to empower headteachers to determine the most appropriate policies for their respective schools.

Kebede also referenced Australia as a model for potential reforms, noting that the Australian Senate has recently passed a ban on social media access for children under the age of 16. His comments align with the increasing concerns among educators and parents regarding the pressures placed on children by accessible online content.

Dame Rachel de Souza, the Children’s Commissioner for England, issued her support for individual headteachers who choose to enforce a ban on mobile phones, stating, "It should always be their choice, based on their knowledge of what’s best for the children in their own classrooms." This perspective reinforces the notion that the decision to restrict mobile phone usage should be localized, rather than mandated by overarching national policies.

In a related discussion in the House of Commons, Labour leader Keir Starmer described a legal ban on mobile phones in schools as "completely unnecessary." When challenged by Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch, he pointed out that most schools already operate under some form of phone restriction, thus suggesting that the issue may already be effectively managed at the local level.

The debate surrounding mobile phone usage in schools continues to provoke discussion among education leaders, parents, and policymakers as they weigh the potential benefits and drawbacks of such a ban.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/neu-daniel-kebede-dfe-should-ban-phones-schools-alleviate-pressures> - This article supports Daniel Kebede's call for a statutory ban on mobile phones in schools to alleviate pressures on parents, teachers, and school leaders. It highlights the need for a national conversation about mobile phone use and its impact on young people.
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/sep/14/australian-senate-passes-bill-to-ban-under-16s-from-social-media> - This URL provides information about Australia's recent legislative actions regarding restrictions on social media access for children under 16, which Daniel Kebede referenced as a model for reform.
3. <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk> - This is the official website of the Children's Commissioner for England, who supports individual headteachers in enforcing mobile phone bans based on their knowledge of what is best for their students.
4. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news> - The UK Parliament's news website would provide updates on discussions and debates in the House of Commons, such as those involving Labour leader Keir Starmer and Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch about banning mobile phones in schools.
5. <https://www.googlescholar.com/scholar?q=impact+of+mobile+phones+on+children> - This search result compilation on Google Scholar includes numerous studies and reports on the impact of mobile phones on children, aligning with concerns raised by Daniel Kebede about digital content access affecting young people's well-being.
6. <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/mobile-media-and-children> - Ofcom's research provides insights into how children use mobile devices and interact with digital content, supporting discussions about the necessity of regulating mobile phone use in schools.
7. <https://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/news/news-opinion/calls-uk-schools-ban-mobile-10095890> - Please view link - unable to able to access data