# House of Commons Education Committee Proposes Smartphone Ban for Under-16s Amid Concerns Over Negative Impacts



The House of Commons Education Committee has proposed that the incoming government consider banning smartphones for children under 16 within its first year. The committee's report highlights serious negative impacts of increased screen time, citing statistics that one in four children use their phones in a manner resembling addiction. The report also notes that 79% of children have encountered violent pornography by the age of 18.

Committee Chair, Robin Walker, emphasized the detrimental effects of excessive smartphone use on children's mental and physical well-being. In response to these concerns, the committee suggested urgent action, including the implementation of parental controls as a default setting and the production of mobile phones specifically designed for children that exclude internet access but allow for calls, texts, and GPS location tracking.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) described a blanket smartphone ban as a "blunt instrument," advocating instead for measures that balance safety with beneficial uses of technology. Some young people and parents have expressed mixed feelings, pointing to both the risks and social benefits of smartphone use.

The report follows earlier government guidance encouraging schools to limit phone use to reset social norms. The possible measures to protect children online would complement the Online Safety Act, set to be fully implemented by 2026. Social media companies and mobile phone operators may also be asked to collaborate on promoting child-safe technology and providing clear guidelines for parental control.