

## CITY OF DERBY ACADEMY

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Headteacher: Mr A Harding BA (Hons) PGCE NPQH



### RE: Changes to the school's mobile phone policy September 2025

Dear parent/carer,

In July I sent you an invite to complete a mobile phone survey on mobile phone use in school and your views on restrictions. Thank you to all of you who responded. In total, there were 186 responses. In the interests of transparency, I have included the results at the end of this letter. What came across in the results was that you felt that mobile phones were an integral part of keeping your children safe. The results also confirmed our shared concerns that whilst mobile phones can be useful, they can also be detrimental to children's wellbeing and education, and over 60% of you are in favour of either a complete ban or more restrictions on mobile phone use in school.

Further to this survey, and a review of the current government guidance, I would now like to share our plans relating to mobile phone use. Links to this guidance and other relevant government research and recommendations can be found here:

[DfE Mobile phones in schools guidance](#)

[House of Commons Library – mobile phones in schools Research Briefing](#)

[DfE Behaviour in schools guidance](#)

The DfE mobile phone guidance was produced in 2024, and the then Secretary of State for Education stated: "One of the greatest challenges facing schools is the presence of mobile phones. Mobile phones risk unnecessary distraction, disruption and diversion. We owe it to our children to do what we can to remove distractions and enable them to be fully present and engaged in the classroom. We also owe it to our pupils to keep them safe at school. By removing mobile phones from the school day, we can create a safe space where pupils are protected from the risks and dangers associated with social media and cyber-bullying, as well as the peer pressure and possible stigma associated with owning what are often expensive devices. This is why we are determined that all schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day – not only during lessons but break and lunchtimes as well."

The guidance states that there are four main options available to schools in England:

1. No mobile phones allowed on the school premises (they must be left at home)
2. Mobile phones handed in on arrival and collected at the end of the day
3. Mobile phones carried by students in lockable pouches which they open during the school day
4. Students may keep their phones, but they are "never used, seen or heard"

We fully understand how important mobile phones are for safety and communication with home. Therefore, we will NOT be imposing a full ban (as some schools have done). Instead, we will be adopting a stricter approach to our current policy (option 4). However, we are investigating option 3, and in exceptional circumstances, especially relating to safeguarding concerns and/or persistent breaches of the policy, we may impose options 1 or 2 for individual students.

# Updated CODA Mobile Phone Policy September 2025 (summary)

## “NEVER USED, SEEN OR HEARD”

### EXPECTATIONS

All students will be allowed to have mobile phones in school on the strict condition that they are never used, seen or heard. Students will not be allowed to use their phones from when they enter the school buildings at 08:35 until they have left the school buildings at 15:10 (or until after-school activities and detentions have been completed). They will not be allowed to use their phones anywhere on the school site during breaks. Phones must be turned off and kept out of sight, which means students cannot:

1. Use their phones for any reason e.g. to read and send messages, check the time, or listen to music
2. Have their mobile phones out or visible (this also includes associated devices such as ear pods and smart watches)
3. Play any music or have any audio or vibrate notifications turned on

However, there may be occasions where mobile phone use is appropriate and legitimate, and flexible adaptations and reasonable adjustments to the policy will be made accordingly on a case-by-case basis. For example:

- Students can use a mobile phone to monitor or manage a medical condition (e.g. type 1 diabetes or hearing)
- Students can use their mobile phone with staff permission and supervision to support learning
- Students can use their mobile phone in exceptional circumstances at specific times and in specific locations with staff permission and supervision (this includes allowing students to contact parents/carers, inform parents/carers about after-school activities and detentions and on school trips)
- Teachers can continue to use their mobile phone to issue rewards and sanctions on Class Charts, for example

### CONSEQUENCES AND SANCTIONS FOR BREACHING THE POLICY

For the purposes of the policy, mobile phones (and associated devices) that are used, seen or heard will be classed as ‘prohibited items’. CODA will follow government guidance and use a range of appropriate sanctions including confiscation if a student does not meet our expectations.

<b>First incident</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Device(s) will be confiscated and stored securely. Text message home.</li><li>• Students can collect the device(s) before they leave at the end of the school day.</li></ul>
<b>Second incident</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Device(s) will be confiscated and stored securely. Text message home.</li><li>• Students can collect the device(s) before they leave at the end of the school day.</li><li>• Students will also receive an appropriate sanction e.g. loss of social time/detention and removal of Class Charts points.</li></ul>
<b>Third incident</b>	As with the second incident, EXCEPT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students will <u>not</u> collect their device(s) at the end of the day. Instead, the school will send a text to inform parents of the confiscation, and parents or nominated family members will be expected to contact the school to arrange the collection of the mobile phone.</li></ul>
<b>Persistent breaches, refusal and negative online behaviour</b>	Persistent breaches and/or serious incidents (such as defiance and refusal to hand over a prohibited item or to be searched) will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. It is to be expected that these will result in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time in internal isolation, escalated to respite at another school or formal suspension if necessary</li><li>• A temporary or even permanent mobile phone ban for an individual with a hand over on arrival every day. Any student banned from bringing a mobile phone on site will be subjected to random searches.</li></ul>

If, on the balance of probabilities, a member of staff believes that a student, however discretely, has used a mobile phone (or associated device) it will be confiscated. Staff will always consider any special circumstances relevant to any breach. Staff will always adhere to the DfE’s Searching, screening and confiscation in schools guidance when necessary. Students will start each half-term with a ‘clean slate’ (unless a ban is in place in which case the ban will be reviewed by the Headteacher).

Although we are not banning mobile phones from the school site, please note that if your child does carry one it is entirely at the student's own risk, and the school does not accept responsibility for lost or damaged devices. The law also protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully.

We encourage you to discuss the updated mobile phone policy with your child as soon as possible, and ensure that they understand our expectations. We will be sharing them during the start of year assemblies and repeating them as necessary.

Under the current policy, most students will be used to having their phones confiscated and returned to them at the end of the current lesson or break. To allow students to adjust to the new expectation (confiscation until the end of the day) **the new policy will formally commence on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September** rather than Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September when all students return to school.

Thank you for your continued support. Through our working together I am confident that CODA will be a more focused and positive learning environment for your child which will help to achieve our vision of 'improving life chances of all students'.

Yours sincerely,

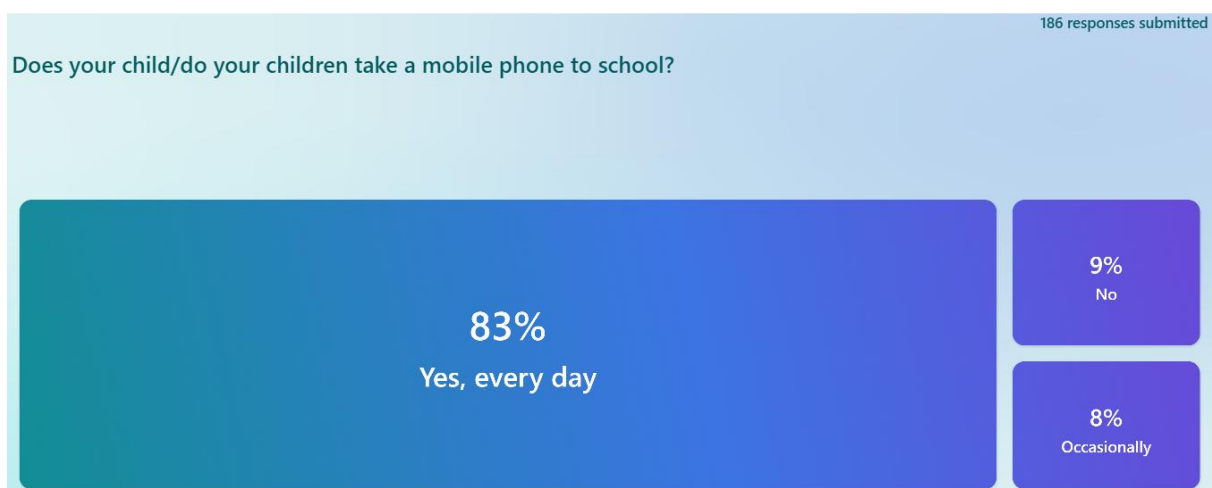
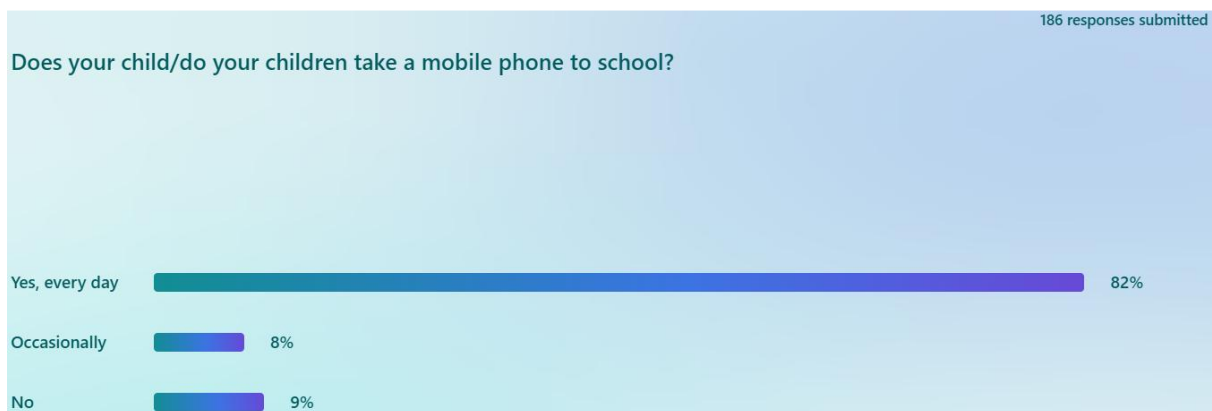
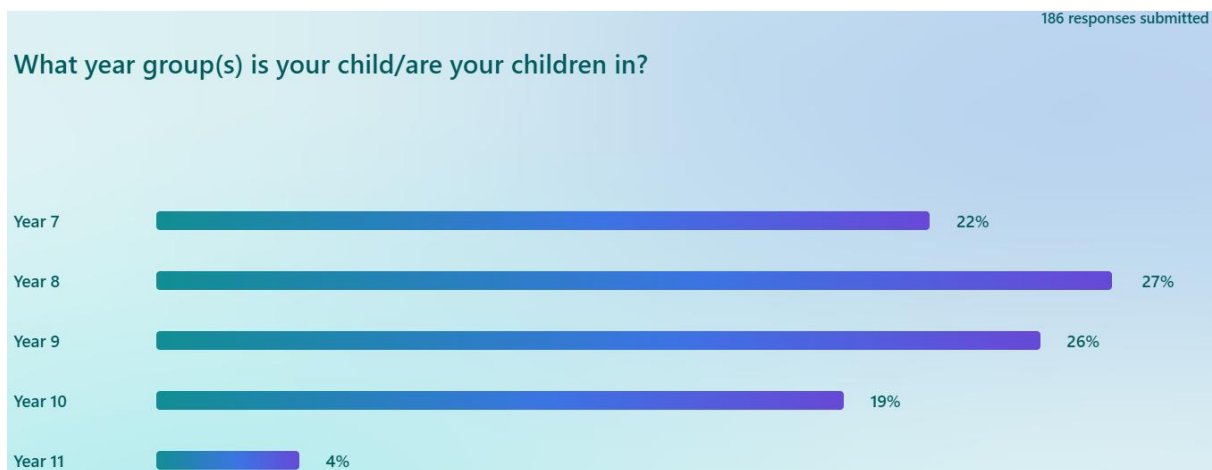
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Harding', enclosed within a light blue rectangular border.

**Adrian Harding (Headteacher)**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS / RESPONSES TO THE PARENT/CARER SURVEY RESULTS

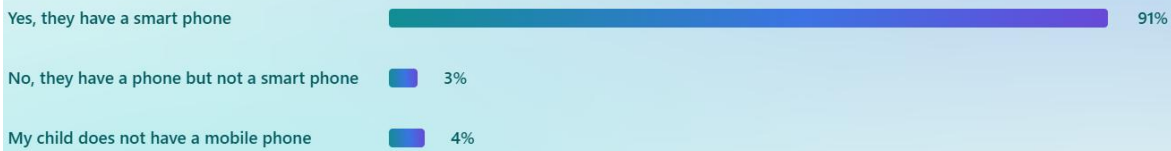
My child has a phone for safety reasons when travelling to and from school. Will the changes to the mobile phone policy affect this?	No. We are not banning mobile phones from the school site (as some schools have done). Students will still be able to use their phones until 08:35 and from 15:10 (or until any after-school activity or detention has been completed).
What if I need to contact my child urgently or send a message during school hours?	Parents and carers can contact the school on <b>01332 270450</b> . Messages will be passed on as quickly as possible, children can be collected from their lesson if you need to collect and/your child will be allowed to contact you if necessary.
What if my child needs to contact me urgently during school hours?	Students can ask teachers and/or the pastoral team for permission to contact home either using their own mobile phone (under supervision) or using a school telephone.
My child uses their mobile phone to manage medical conditions e.g. blood sugar levels, hearing aid volume. Will they get into trouble?	Absolutely not. We already have several students who do this. If you haven't already done so, please let us know the details about your child's condition and how we can support them.
My child uses their mobile phone to check the time. What will they do now?	There is no need to use a mobile phone to check the time. Doing so means the mobile phone is on and there is a risk that they will see and be tempted to read and respond to messages. All classrooms and social areas have a clock and/or the time displayed on the screen. Being able to tell the time is a life skill. We encourage students to wear a watch if necessary.
My child uses their mobile phone to check their timetable. What will they do now?	Students are given a paper copy of their timetable at the start of the year which they are encouraged to carry. All student timetables are displayed in the Compass Area which can be checked between lessons. We will be creating more timetable displays around school. We can provide replacement copies of timetables and students can ask a member of staff if necessary.
Why can't my child use their phone during break times?	We are following government guidance to prohibit the use of mobile phones during the whole school day (including breaks and lunchtimes) to avoid access to messaging platforms and social media and any associated risks.
My child normally carries their phone in their hand. Is this breaking the rules?	Yes. To enforce the "never used, seen or heard" rule we must insist that students carry phones in pockets or bags. We expect students to have bags for stationery, PE kit, jumpers, coats, etc.
Mobile phones can be a useful tool to support learning. Will this opportunity be lost?	No. The policy allows appropriate and legitimate use of mobile phones during lessons at the teacher's discretion.
If confiscated, will my child's phone be stored safely?	Yes, phones will be stored in various secure locations around school e.g. classrooms and pastoral offices and Student Services.
<p>I do not agree to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>my child's mobile phone/earphones/smart watch being confiscated</li> <li>my child's mobile phone/earphones/smart watch being retained by the school until they are collected by a parent/carer</li> <li>my child or their belongings being searched</li> </ul>	<p><b>For the purposes of the policy, mobile phones that are used, seen or heard (and associated devices) will be classed as 'prohibited items'.</b></p> <p>Government guidance confirms that Headteachers and staff they authorise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are backed by the DfE to confiscate and retain prohibited items (including mobile phones and associated devices) as a disciplinary penalty for the length of time they deem proportionate.</li> <li>Have a statutory power to search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the student is in possession of a 'prohibited item'.</li> </ul> <p>Searching may be required when, for example, a student has handed in one mobile phone, but they may have another mobile phone in their possession. CODA staff will always adhere to the DfE's Searching, screening and confiscation in schools guidance.</p>
I do not agree to my child having an after-school detention in relation to mobile phone use (or any other breach of the rules).	Government guidance states that schools do not have to give notice to parents/carers for after-school detentions so long as the student can get home safely after (but we will always consider individual circumstances).
I do not agree to my child receiving a sanction (including detention, suspension or a mobile phone ban) for (mis)using their mobile phone outside of school hours.	Government guidance states that schools may sanction students if their online behaviour is threatening or causes harm to another student. They may also sanction a student if their behaviour online impacts behaviour and discipline in the school environment.

## CODA Parent/Carer Survey: mobile phone use in school- RESULTS (July 2025)



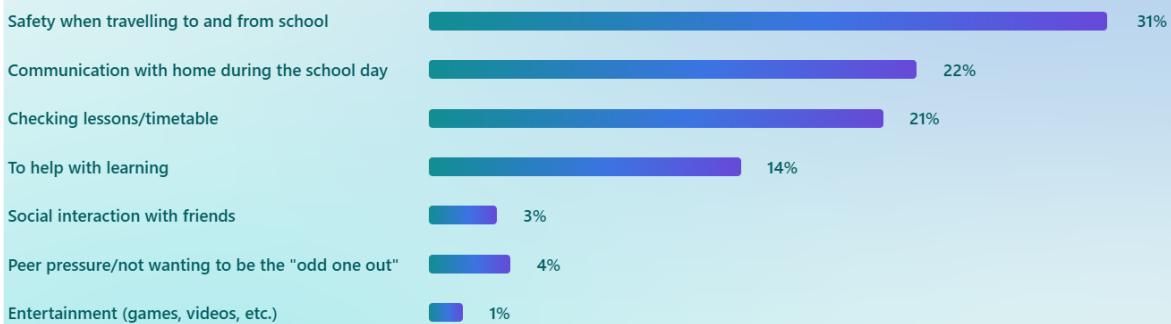
186 responses submitted

Does your child/do your children use a "smart" phone that has access to the internet, apps, etc.?



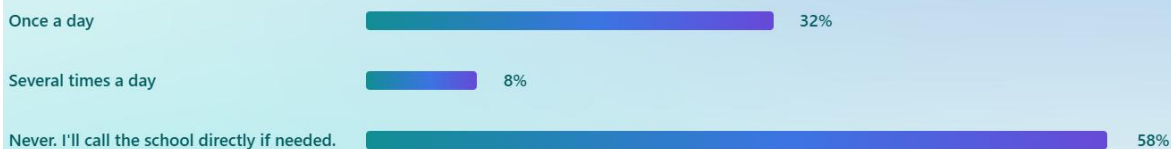
186 responses submitted

On school days, what are the main reasons you want your child/children to have a mobile phone?



186 responses submitted

How often do you message your child/children when they are at school?



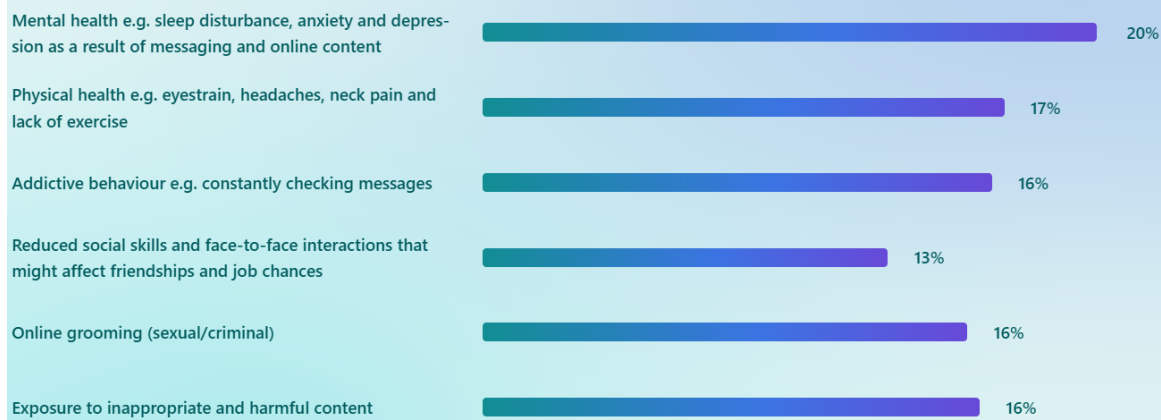
186 responses submitted

If you do message your child/children when they are at school, why do you do this instead of calling the school?



186 responses submitted

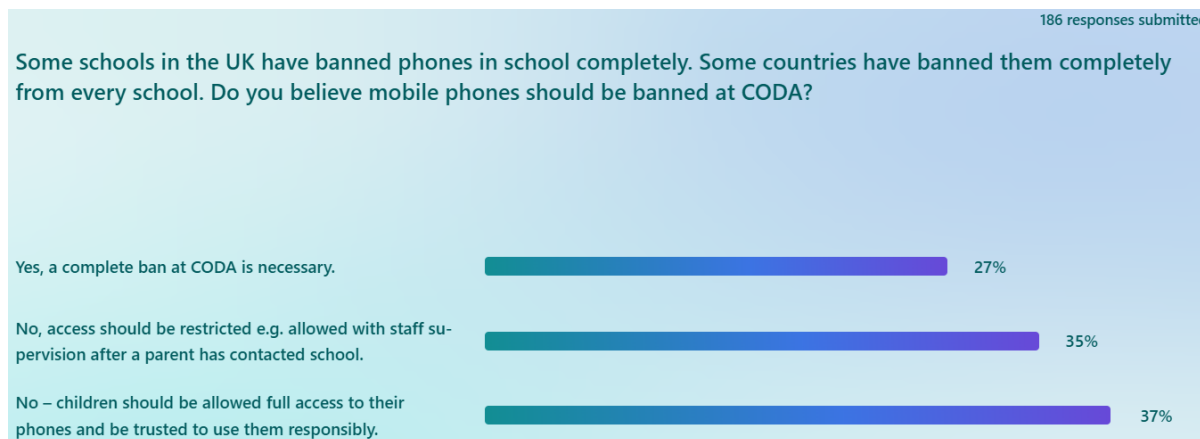
There is a lot of international research showing that mobile phone use is having a negative effect on children. Which effects are you most concerned about?



186 responses submitted

There is a lot of research that mobile phone use in school can be harmful to children's education. Which effects are you most concerned about?





#### ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS?

"I think they should be allowed at break time. "

"the child should be able to use the phone at the appropriate times e.g break time/ lunchtime and if the don't adhere to the rules, the phone should be confiscated and securely stored til the end of the day"

"Personally I think instead of banning them, perhaps hand them in at beginning of day or harsh punishments if caught with them in use in class"

"My son was once marked absent from school despite having left home in the morning for school. As parents we were frantic wondering where he was as was told he hadn't registered and this was at 11:30 ish. Luckily we were able to make contact at break time via his mobile phone. It turns out he was in school but supply teacher did not recognise him and mark him on register for a double period. "

"I do not feel comfortable if my child does not have access to there phone to call me in a moment of anxiety or stress. Ive called the school many of times and still my child hasn't received help. Their phone is purely for moments they need me and for safety between home and school. "

"Teachers have asked my daughter to use her phone during lessons "

"Kids with underlying health issues should be allowed to use their phone when needed to contact the parent ,as sometimes teachers do ignore kids if they are making them aware of how they are not feeling well"

"I feel that some children do not need to have a ban on phones as they are not breaking the rules, for example they are never seen on their phones during lesson and the phone is not disrupting their learning. I feel that the children who are on their phones should no It be allowed to have their phone in school as they have shown they cannot be responsible and follow the school rules. I believe the best way is to only ban the phones from the students who cannot be responsible and allow the responsible children to keep their phones. This would be a good lesson to the children who don't follow the mobile phones rules. I also feel that parents have a huge role to play in this and need to support the school on the rules."

"My daughter has health conditions including migraines and ibs, she isn't even allowed to go to the bathroom in lesson time. If she needs to come home she is never allowed so she has to be able to contact me. "

"I don't agree with banning phones. If parents could trust staff to pass messages on then maybe. Also I can track my child on route to and from school. "

"Should be banned in emergency school should contact parents thanks "



"We can't completely restrict them from the usage of mobile phones in this world of technology. So let them to use it responsibly. "

"In my opinion is right to keep the phone off during the school."

"If children aren't allowed them,neither should staff. Both my girls have told me of staff with them out in class "

"Mobile phones should be allowed in specific times e.g. before school, in lunch break, or at the end of school!"

"My child while in year 6 missed her way to school by entering the wrong bus and unfortunately she had no phone on her, hence we bought her a phone for emergency call only. This she hands over when she resume school and picks it up at close of school. "

"I'm agree that mobile phone can be a distraction if they are used at inappropriate times in school, but like with my child he collects a younger sibling from junior school and for me it is the reassurance that I can communicate with him/them on the way home from school if needed. My thoughts are also should teachers not then be setting examples of if bans are in place in the school day for phones that teachers and staff should have to follow the same rules to set a example to students. Do find that often it's one rule for adults and one for a child but if we are wanting our children to grow up in a respectful society and following example should it not be then seen that their peers are doing it! "

"I would like my child to have their phone on the way to school and back. I think in lessons all phones should be collected in to avoid being disturbed and addiction to phones and bettee concentration."

"Mobile no allowed "

"It's important we work with the children, I agree that some restrictions need to be in place and respect for the teacher & their teachings need to be made paramount, behaviour and respect speaking up in the right way need to be the key fundamental Thanks"

"My child having a mobile phone in school is a direct source for them to get in touch for any emergency reason and mainly if the school is not able to be contacted in any circumstance such as a fire, shootings etc and also for the safety of him getting to and from school. "

"My son has autism and adhd he only has his phone for safety and only use it for emergency I feel better knowing if he needs me he can get hold of me "

"Teachers should keep eys on students every time they shouldn't misuse the mobile phn at school."

"My main concern is knowing my child is ok. Things are different in today's society and as a parent it is a bit more comforting to know where they are "

"No because parents need communication with their child for safety purposes I believe "

"They should take to school for safety reasons because some people come home alone and parents will be aware of where their child is and sometimes there are bad situations and at least they will know their child is safe and if not then parents can get worried easily "

"Don't ban phones as I need to know if he has reached school and has left school safely "

"Children should have phone in school at break only"

"My child started using the phone in school with the permission of the teachers. Whenever the I see her online in the class timetable I scold her and her answer is the teacher doesn't say anything... In a school, if there are rules, they must be applied to everyone and always. "

"Due to my job my children are aware of the dangers of social media etc and do not have access to this, however, the mobile phone is vital for communicating with parents. Unfortunately there was an incident within school that involved

my child and when calling school I was still unable to get an answer on whether my child was ok. This incident was dealt with and a meeting was had. However for own peace of mind and my child's safety I do explain they should contact me if any happens or they feel unsafe. One of my children has autism so feels safe knowing they can contact me if needed, however school rules are respected and adhered to. "

"It's a difficult one, it depends on your child and how the parent connects and supports their child. My daughter is aware not to use the phone during school but at times catches the bus with her friends hence why she needs the phone on her. It's personal circumstances too that should be factored in. Perhaps handing the phones at the beginning of the lesson collecting them at the end is a good, but comes with time constraints in doing so. My daughter has an infinite non mol order against a perpetrator so having the phone on her reassures me. "

"Schools needs to stop the children use the phone inside the school. But phone is necessary to a child for safety. "

"Time with phones should be restricted "

"some schools are able to block ther wifi yet codas is fully accessible to all students throughout the school day & not limited to availability just at lunchtime which i believe would be more appropriate "

"Hand in at start of day or locked away in lockers and taken out at end of dayear "

"I think this Survey is written to suit an agenda as when asked to pick 3, I didn't want to pick 3 so I feel you're pressed into picking ones which suit the agenda, whatever that may be"

"Using the phone, especially smart phone is making the student antisocial people and they are put at high risk of bullying, abuse etc. "

"Children should at least be given access at break or lunch at the very least just to check in or contact parents if needed."

"I think my child is abusing the school phone policy and that has a reflection on his behaviour and grades. In my opinion if there's a complete ban to mobile, he will do much better moving forward without that phone distraction. "

"No phone in school"

"Phone use should be banned during school time but keeping the phone in switched off mode should be allowed for parent child communication about travel or coming home late etc "

"It's a big question. I was pet to believe that phones couldn't be used in school but have been told phones have been allowed to take pictures during lessons. I find those useful but don't find it the sole reason for children to have their phones. May be useful for phones to be deposited during registration and picked up at end of day. It would require adjustment for the staff and children but think it's worth the investment. I hate to think how much phones disrupt lessons"

"If we're gearing our children up to be responsible adults they should be trusted to have their phones on them during the school day and learn to use them appropriately as per the schools policy as they would do in any work environment/higher education after school. "

"My child follows the schools policy and primarily uses his phone during travel to and from school due to his SEN needs. If he uses it during school hours the teacher has always given him permission to do so. A blanket ban on phones will be harmful to those students who have these additional needs who use their phone to regulate like my son. "

"I think a phone should be allowed but only for the purpose of using emergency, safety and security measures. As working parents we need to keep a track on kids and monitor them. I fully support the teachers if a child is playing on their phones during lessons then they should have a system where phones are taken off them in lessons and given back at the end of lessons. No parent should be contacting their child during lessons. Also school should provide a chat system like class dojo for parents to quick message teachers and teachers respond to it if there is a issue at home or school."

"Children should be allowed phone and used after school."

"I think the children should be allowed to use at break times and also the school is not good with communication so I have and will continue to contact my children is necessary "

"My child is responsible with their phone and shouldn't be punished for those who are not. Their phone is a safety net to me and for them to feel safe when feeling anxious or unhappy/unheard in school. I do not agree with phones in school for any other use but safety and medical. "

"My son only uses his phone during breaks and kids at school have to have phones because their parents call when they're late home."

"There are times when I have had messages from the school stating my daughter is not in school and as soon as I've messaged her, she has sent me a picture to prove she is in school. The surrounding areas of coda are dangerous and children need to have something to be able to call for help when needed and not feel punished for using that support when necessary "

"They should be allowed it especially because if there's ever an emergency"

"Yes i am agreed with all suggestions need to be very aware if children using phones at school time many thanks "

"I need my sons to have their phones during school time, my son was bullied and physically hurt and the office arnt always available at the time or just send him back to class. My son feels safer messaging me and I go into school as he knows more will get sorted that way."

"Jestem Żary żeby mieli telefon gdy czują się bezpieczni a na przewie niech zadzwoni do rodziców jak potrzebuje "

"The mobile is a safety clause for when travelling to and from school as well as for tracking purposes. I must be able to track where my child is in the way to school and back. He is fully aware of the rules to turn off during the school day. "

"No, I do not think phones should be banned or lett at home as some parents do track their child for safety when going to and from school. Also some parents work so do contact children/child too and from school. I think personally some children let it down for others. We are in 2025 and unfortunately technology is high."

"Children should only be allowed to use their phones before the school day starts and at break times."

"My daughter does have a phone when she goes to school. Just to communicate with her if needed however if there was a ban from the school then I would contact the school "

"Surely for emergency use"

"I never had a phone when I was at school it's a distraction and me an dad belive they should be banned "

"no 10- should be able to use during break times, to check timetable. educational apps are on the phones!"

"Unless CODA staff is fully trained and I feel my children are safe then sure ban the mobile phones. However we all know that will not happen as it has happened to me before and then repeated so I have no trust left in the CODA staff.

"I have 2 sons and one takes his and the other doesn't. My kids know when and when not to use them, they say that sometimes they use them in class for learning so this is authorised. My eldest likes to ring in his way home to check we are in and to let us know he is safe."

"You have made it almost impossible for thr children to fo school life without net access. Phones should be locked away during school but you need to drop the reliance on them. "

"I will never agree to my child not bringing a phone to school, for safety reasons they will always have it. There has been numerous incidents where my child has needed to contact me through their phone. And due to a police incident they have been told to always have their phone with them"

"Telefon powinien być dostępny w czasie przerwy, żeby w razie czego skontaktować się z dzieckiem. "

"they should be able to use they phones at break and lunch time "

"My child is often told to use their phone in class to research topics My child let's me know if an after school activity has been cancelled "

"Some parents have apps to know there child's whereabouts so rely on these to know there at school safe and home safely especially when they have other children at different schools they can keep track better, also some children do still struggle with telling the time on a clock so being able to check there phone for the time if they have appointments to be picked up for helps without them being punished as some learning difficulties affect time telling on a clock."

"They should be allowed to have them in bags or pockets as long as not on them in lessons "

"I would not support phones being banned as it brings peace of mind as it's how I track where my children are. I do however, support a ban on phones being used in school. "

"It's just very helpful after school finishes I can reach her and find him safe because we have to pick up other children from different schools "

"Don't see why having a phone effects there learning its our way of knowing there safe in and out of school the same with uniform if kids have to wear the uniform so should the teachers ! "

"Children should be allowed to use phone on break time "

"Taking phones so they know they can use in emergency is acceptable. With what I've seen and heard my child will always take phone for safety."

"Safety is very important in the world we live in so my son needs his phone incase as I am full time single mother."

"My daughter has been bullied and beat up at school. Most of the time she can't get hold of senior staff members. So I have told her to ring me if she can t and is very worried about anything "