

Screenfree Schools Gloucestershire

Phone-free in school. More childhood beyond it.

A practical starting point for parents who want to work constructively with their school.

This pack helps small groups of parents begin a calm, informed conversation about school phone policies and positive opportunities for life beyond screens.

It is designed to support collaboration, not to name, rate or criticise individual schools.

Created by Screenfree Hubs, Gloucestershire

1. What the guidance says

Department for Education guidance on mobile phones in schools became statutory on 29 June 2026. Schools were expected to begin following it from 1 September 2026.

The guidance says:

- Schools should be mobile phone-free by default.
- Pupils should not have access to their phones during lessons, between lessons, at breaktimes or during lunchtime.
- Schools should publish their policy and explain clearly how it works.
- Staff should apply the policy consistently.
- Parents and pupils should be involved when a policy is introduced or changed.
- Headteachers decide how best to achieve a phone-free day in their own school context.

Statutory guidance does not impose one identical policy on every school. Schools must have regard to it while considering their legal duties and their pupils' individual circumstances.

Individual needs and exceptions

Policies must recognise reasonable adjustments and exceptional circumstances. These may include disability, medical needs, young carers, particular circumstances at home, safety or travel concerns, and other individual needs.

Flexibility does not necessarily mean unrestricted access. A school can agree when, where and for what purpose a pupil may use a phone.

This summary is for general information and is not legal advice.

2. A warm first email

Subject: A constructive conversation about our school's mobile phone policy

Dear [Headteacher's name],

We are a small group of parents at [school name] who would welcome a constructive conversation about the school's approach to mobile phones.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance now says that schools should be mobile phone-free by default throughout the school day. We recognise that every school is different and that any policy must consider individual needs, medical requirements, travel arrangements and the practical realities facing staff.

We would be interested to understand what the school currently does, what is working well and whether its published policy or day-to-day implementation is being reviewed in light of the guidance.

Our intention is to support the school, listen and explore how parents and pupils might contribute positively. We are also interested in what could be offered beyond the school gate, including more opportunities for children to connect, play and spend time together without screens.

Would you be open to a short meeting with two or three parents?

Kind regards,

[Names]

[Children's year groups]

[Contact details]

Optional wording for governors or a trust

We would be grateful to understand how the governing body or trust is assuring itself that the school's published policy, its implementation and any individual adjustments reflect the current statutory guidance. We would also welcome an opportunity for parents and pupils to contribute constructively to any future review.

3. Five questions for a meeting

- 1** Where can families find the school's current mobile phone policy, and when was it last reviewed?
- 2** How does the policy work throughout the whole school day, including breaks, lunchtime and movement between lessons?
- 3** How are reasonable adjustments and individual circumstances handled for disabled pupils, medical needs, young carers and children with travel or safety concerns?
- 4** How are expectations explained consistently to pupils, parents and staff, and what helps the school apply the policy fairly in practice?
- 5** How can pupils and families help shape both the policy and positive alternatives, including social, creative, physical and outdoor opportunities?

Begin with curiosity. The aim is to understand the school's experience and identify what parents and pupils can do to help.

4. Starting a parent group

Begin small

Find two or three parents who share the concern. A small, thoughtful group is often a better beginning than a large campaign.

Listen before proposing

Read the existing school policy. Ask what is already working, where there is confusion, what concerns families have and what support the school might need.

Approach the school constructively

Request a conversation through the headteacher, parent forum, governors or trust. Begin with curiosity rather than criticism.

Include children's voices

Ask pupils what helps them feel connected during the school day and what they would enjoy during phone-free breaks. Participation should be voluntary, age-appropriate and properly safeguarded.

Grow beyond the gate

Explore clubs, walks, outdoor play, creative activities and parent gatherings. A phone-free policy is stronger when children have appealing alternatives.

Connect locally

Share what you are learning with Screenfree Schools Gloucestershire. Where several families live near one another, the conversation may help a local Screenfree Hub take root.

5. Useful resources

Official guidance

[Department for Education: mobile phones in schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools>

[Full statutory guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools>

[DfE school case studies](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/creating-a-mobile-phone-free-environment-school-case-studies)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/creating-a-mobile-phone-free-environment-school-case-studies>

[DfE guidance on communicating with parents](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/communicating-your-policy-for-prohibiting-the-use-of-mobile-phones-in-schools-to-parents)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/communicating-your-policy-for-prohibiting-the-use-of-mobile-phones-in-schools-to-parents>

Practical examples

[Smartphone Free Childhood policy examples](https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/resource/primary-and-secondary-school-policy-examples)

<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/resource/primary-and-secondary-school-policy-examples>

[Smartphone Free Childhood policy options](https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/resource/school-policy-options)

<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/resource/school-policy-options>

[Smartphone Free Childhood school toolkit](https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/resource/your-back-to-school-policy-essentials)

<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/resource/your-back-to-school-policy-essentials>

Continue the conversation

Visit screenfreehubs.uk or email ian@natureconnection.world.

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