

CYPE(6)-14-22 – Paper to note 1

Additional information from the National Association of Head Teachers regarding the use of mobile phones in schools.

As far as you're aware, do schools generally have policies in place restricting access to/use of phones during lessons and/or breaktimes?

- Is there guidance to schools on this or is it left to schools' discretion?
- Does the union have a position on pupils' use of phones?
- Would you welcome a consistent national approach, such as for example a general restriction on pupils using mobile phones throughout the school day?

All schools have policies in place that ban the use of mobile phones in class. There may be varying degrees of restrictions in secondary, for example they may be allowed to be used at lunch but certainly not in lesson time.

Some LAs would have authority-wide policies adopted by schools or schools have developed their own policies - that's in line with most policies in schools, there is rarely one national policy. For example disciplinary policies - there's national guidance from WG of what the expectation is to be included, but its just guidance and schools and LAs develop their own policies to suit their own needs and settings.

NAHT's view is that of our members which is to say that mobile phones have no place in the classroom.

National guidance, if it was felt it was warranted would be useful in the same way WG guidance on a host of issues is useful but its guidance, its not enforceable and the biggest challenge for schools around mobile phones and social media is not what goes on in school or during school hours, its what happens outside schools, in our communities that has an impact on school life.

As a rights-respecting organisation it is not for our members or a school to advise parents on whether or not to buy children phones and allow them social media accounts, that is down to parent choice and the responsibility of parents to manage. However, those decisions have consequences for schools. School leaders tend to find themselves involved in very challenging situations when it comes to social media for example. If a child posts something about another child, outside of school, not related to school at all but both children attend the same school, its the school that has to deal with the parental complaints, even though the school is not directly involved. The school just has to deal with the consequences. Its that blurred line between what is a schools responsibility and what is not that is exacerbated by social media. That is incredibly challenging.