

Dear

I am urging you to change our school's cell phone policy, to one where students are required to put their phones away during school hours. Students have a greater chance of doing better academically and emotionally when they are not tempted to be on their phones.

Schools that have made this change, even from allowing phones during free periods and recess, have reported increased academic achievement and reduced distraction for their students. There are several reasons I ask for this change.

1. Self-control is not fully developed in the adolescent brain

Smartphones are built with 'persuasive design' to take up as much of our attention as possible. To disadvantage student's learning while they are still developing self-control is to do them a disservice. Self-control can be developed by giving students challenges and opportunities in other areas they are more likely to succeed in. I believe we can address the issue of responsible smartphone use without using them as a learning platform.

2. Smartphone use can impact on academic outcomes

Smartphones have been shown to interrupt attention, and research has found that removing smartphones from schools increases performance by 6.4%, or by more than 14% for disadvantaged students, ([Beyland & Murphy, 2015](#)).

3. The impacts on social skills and well being

Removing smartphones from schools gives kids the opportunity to socialise face to face during breaks. Studies have found increasing rates of depression and anxiety in adolescents, and an association with media use. Face to face time with friends and in fact any non-screen activities are associated with reduced feelings of depression. Not only cyberbullying but feeling left out of group chat ('compare and despair') can make it hard for students to focus on school work.

I would appreciate it if you can consider these points, and change our school policy to one where phones must be put away during school hours. For further information on the impact of smartphone use in schools please visit [www.sensiblescreenuse.org](http://www.sensiblescreenuse.org).

Thank you