

Should Schools Ban Mobile Phones?

Imagine a classroom where students are meant to be solving math problems, but instead, their eyes are glued to their phones, scrolling through social media or texting friends. This scenario is all too common in schools today, and it highlights a growing problem: mobile phones are disrupting learning. While phones can be useful tools, their presence in schools often does more harm than good. Schools should ban mobile phones to minimise distractions, improve academic performance, and foster a healthier learning environment.

Mobile phones are a major source of distraction in classrooms. Studies show that students who use phones during class are more likely to miss important information and perform poorly on tests. For example, a 2020 study by the London School of Economics found that banning phones in schools led to a 6.4% increase in test scores, equivalent to adding five extra days to the school year. When students are distracted by their phones, they not only fall behind academically but also disrupt their peers, creating a ripple effect that harms the entire class. By banning phones, schools can create a focused environment where students are fully engaged in their lessons. This leads to the next point: improved academic performance.

Banning phones can significantly boost students' academic achievements. In schools where phones are banned, teachers report higher levels of participation and better-quality work. For instance, a high school in Australia saw a 25% improvement in homework completion rates after implementing a phone ban. Without the constant temptation to check notifications, students can concentrate better, retain more information, and perform well in exams. Schools can provide lockers or secure storage for phones during the day, ensuring students are not tempted to use them. Beyond academics, banning phones also promotes healthier social interactions.

Phones can negatively impact students' social skills and mental health. Excessive phone use has been linked to increased anxiety, depression, and loneliness among teenagers. A 2019 study by the University of Michigan found that students who spent more time on their phones were less likely to engage in face-to-face conversations, leading to weaker social bonds. Overreliance on phones can isolate

students and hinder their ability to communicate effectively, which is essential for teamwork and building relationships. A phone ban encourages students to interact with each other during breaks, fostering stronger friendships and better communication skills. These benefits make a strong case for banning phones in schools.

While mobile phones have their uses, their presence in schools often undermines learning, social development, and mental health. By banning phones, schools can create a focused, productive, and socially enriching environment where students can thrive. It's time to prioritise education over entertainment and give students the tools they need to succeed—both academically and socially.

Should Homework Be Banned?

Picture a student hunched over their desk at 9:00 pm, eyes drooping as they scramble to finish a mountain of homework. Across the city, another student gives up entirely, overwhelmed by tasks they don't understand. Homework, once seen as a tool for reinforcing learning, has become a source of stress and inequality. While it has its merits, the negative impacts of homework outweigh its benefits. Schools should ban traditional homework to prioritise student wellbeing, equity, and meaningful learning.

Homework often creates unnecessary stress for students and families. A 2023 study by the University of Melbourne found that 70% of Australian primary students reported feeling anxious about homework, with many staying up late to complete it. This stress can lead to burnout, reducing motivation to learn and harming mental health. Banning homework would allow students to recharge after school, spend time with family, and pursue hobbies—activities crucial for developing creativity and resilience. Without the pressure of homework, students could return to class refreshed and ready to engage.

Critics argue that homework reinforces classroom learning and teaches responsibility. They claim that practising skills at home helps students master topics like maths or spelling. While this may hold true for some, homework often widens the gap between students. Those with access to tutors, quiet study spaces,

or supportive parents gain an unfair advantage, while others fall behind. For example, a child caring for siblings after school may lack time or resources to complete assignments, deepening educational inequality. Homework doesn't teach responsibility—it highlights privilege.

A better solution is to replace homework with in-class tasks or project-based learning. Schools could dedicate short periods during the day for independent practice, ensuring all students receive equal support. For instance, Finland—a global leader in education—banned homework years ago and instead focuses on collaborative, hands-on activities during school hours. Australian schools could adopt similar approaches, such as group projects or reflective journaling, to deepen understanding without burdening families.

Homework is an outdated practice that fails to meet the needs of modern students. By banning it, schools can reduce stress, level the playing field, and focus on engaging, equitable learning. Education should inspire curiosity—not exhaustion.