

Tuesday 11th February 2025 – Anonymous 7

To: Scrutiny Communications <Scrutiny@gov.je>

Subject: Concerns Regarding Smartphone Use in Jersey Secondary Schools

Dear Scrutiny Panel,

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding children's access to smartphones during school hours. Regardless of their age, I strongly believe that Jersey secondary schools should be entirely phone-free zones. By this, I do not mean a "no see, no hear" approach, but rather that phones should be securely locked away in lockers or pouches, only to be accessed at the end of the school day. This is a realistic and necessary step toward long-term cultural change, supporting the safeguarding of all children in our schools.

I am also extremely concerned about the lack of legislation around social media and smartphone use for children. There is an urgent need for stricter policies, including potentially limiting or banning social media for under-16s and ensuring that families in Jersey have access to simple, 'brick' phones that prioritize safety over social media and gaming distractions. Our children deserve to experience childhood without the constant pressures and risks posed by unrestricted digital access.

This issue is much bigger than just classroom distraction; it is a significant public health concern. The impact of smartphones and social media on young people's mental health, social development, and well-being is undeniable. Many children are exposed to cyberbullying, harassment, violent and explicit content, and the pressures of online validation from an alarmingly young age.

If a school claims to have a "phone ban" but still allows access during breaks and lunch, this only reinforces the problem. Phones in schools contribute to increased bullying, distraction from learning, and exposure to harmful content.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this. I appreciate the effort being made to address this important issue, which is particularly important to my family as our children are going to be starting secondary in the next year.

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