England plans stricter school phone ban

LEVEL B1



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I. WARM-UP

1. What are the phone rules at your school now?
2. Do you find it hard to concentrate when your phone is near?
3. How would your day change without a phone until home time?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

- **guidance** official advice that tells people what to do in a situation
- **survey** a set of questions used to find out what people think or do
- **distract** to take someone's attention away from what they are doing
- **concentrate** to focus your mind on one thing and not be distracted
- **ban** an official rule that does not allow something
- **storage** the place or method used to keep things safely
- **locker** a small metal cupboard with a lock, often used in schools
- **funding** money provided to pay for a plan or project

III. READING

The government in England has set out tougher rules on mobile phones in schools. From September 2027, pupils will not be allowed to have their phones with them at any time during the school day. Ministers say the aim is to help students concentrate in lessons and talk to friends, not scroll.

Existing guidance from September 2026 asked schools to be "mobile phone-free", but methods varied. Some schools use sealed pouches or lockers, or collect phones at the gate; others already ban them from the site. A Department for Education survey found only 16% of secondary pupils said rules are followed all the time.

Education Secretary Lucy Powell said school is for learning and friendship, not scrolling, and that phones distract from learning. Head teachers' groups warn stronger approaches could be costly, needing storage or lockable pouches for every pupil, so extra funding may be required. Across the UK, rules differ.

Scotland plans a law to restrict personal use. Wales voted against a national legal ban, while Northern Ireland is consulting on a legal ban.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News:** *"How strict is your school about phones?". Original article linked at* theenglishwire.com.

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What will change in England from September 2027?
2. Why does the government support stricter phone rules?
3. What did the Department for Education's survey find?
4. What problem do school leaders warn about?
5. How do phone rules differ in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Would a full-day phone ban improve your lessons? Why or why not?
2. What is a fair way to store phones at school, if they are banned?
3. When is using a phone at school actually helpful? Give an example.
4. How could students help make phone rules work better?



VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Alternative comparison

How we compare choices or qualities: more/less + adjective + than; as/not as + adjective + as; prefer A to B; would rather A than B. Use than after comparatives, and as ... as for equality.

"Our school is **stricter than** *it was last term."*

"This class is **not as noisy as** *the younger one."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Students are more distracted in class (as / than) in tests. _____
2. My phone is (not as new than / not as new as) yours. _____
3. I prefer lockers (to pouches / than pouches) at school. _____
4. Old rules were (as strict than / less strict than) new ones. _____
5. We'd rather talk (than scroll / to scroll) at lunch. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.



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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 6–8 minutes warm-up, 8–10 minutes vocabulary, 10–12 minutes reading, 8–10 minutes comprehension, 8–10 minutes discussion. Combine grammar with reading time if needed.
- Pre-teach or check: guidance, distract, concentrate, locker, funding. Use quick mimes (notifications popping up) or short examples students finish.
- Run the reading in pairs: one underlines reasons for the ban, the other notes concerns and the 16% figure; then compare. Start discussion with a quick class vote on a full-day ban before pair talk.
- Differentiation: stronger students draft a 40–50 word announcement for their school; others list three pros and three cons with sentence starters. Allow L1 for planning but require English when sharing.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Poll the room first, then pair students with someone who disagrees to share reasons.
2. Elicit 2–3 storage options on the board (lockers, pouches) before small-group talks.
3. Prompt specific moments (homework photo, timetable, language app) to avoid vague answers.
4. Set a 2-minute brainstorm for simple class rules; ask groups to pick their top two.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In teams, prepare a 60-second argument for or against a full-day phone ban, then deliver it.

Writing: Write a 70–90 word message from the head teacher explaining the new rules to students.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Alternative comparison

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What will change in England from September 2027?
   Pupils will not be allowed to have phones with them during the school day.
2. Why does the government support stricter phone rules?
   They say it will help pupils concentrate and talk to friends instead of scrolling.
3. What did the Department for Education's survey find?
   Only 16% of secondary pupils said phone rules are followed all the time.
4. What problem do school leaders warn about?
   Changes could be costly, needing storage or lockable pouches, so extra funding may be needed.
5. How do phone rules differ in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?
   Scotland plans a law, Wales voted against a national ban, and Northern Ireland is consulting.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Students are more distracted in class (as / than) in tests. **than**
2. My phone is (not as new than / not as new as) yours. **not as new as**
3. I prefer lockers (to pouches / than pouches) at school. **to pouches**
4. Old rules were (as strict than / less strict than) new ones. **less strict than**
5. We'd rather talk (than scroll / to scroll) at lunch. **than scroll**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: How we compare choices or qualities: more/less + adjective + than; as/not as + adjective + as; prefer A to B; would rather A than B. Use than after comparatives, and as ... as for equality. (Examples constructed.)

"Our school is **stricter than** *it was last term."*

"This class is **not as noisy as** *the younger one."*