

Phone Free EBA

Where are we going with mobile phones?

Dan Price
Cheshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

PHONE FREE
EDUCATION

Funding
information

November 2025

See it, lose it

- We thought this was working well.
- We assumed that there were minimal issues and that, unless a major safeguarding issue occurred, we would retain the ‘see it, lose it’ approach.
- We were invited to go to the Jodrell Bank presentation in October to hear about a project to create a total ban in school on mobile phones.
- We went but with a real scepticism.
- We came back as converts.
- There is a moral need to make this happen.

National picture

79% of UK schools operate the lowest form of mobile phone ban.

3.5% of schools ban phones being brought to school outright.

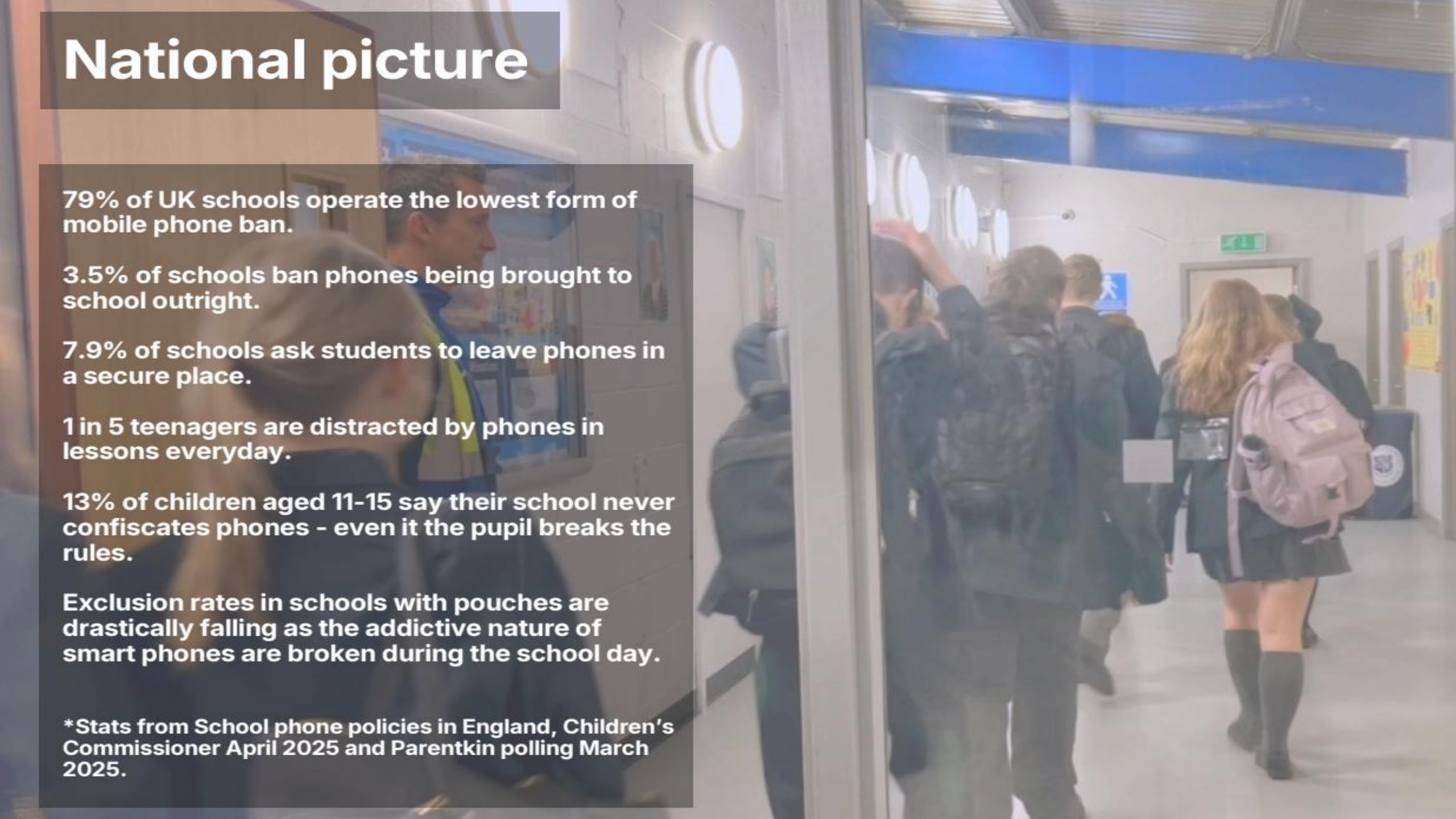
7.9% of schools ask students to leave phones in a secure place.

1 in 5 teenagers are distracted by phones in lessons everyday.

13% of children aged 11-15 say their school never confiscates phones - even it the pupil breaks the rules.

Exclusion rates in schools with pouches are drastically falling as the addictive nature of smart phones are broken during the school day.

*Stats from School phone policies in England, Children's Commissioner April 2025 and Parentkin polling March 2025.





Dr Emily Sehmer

Consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist, CAMHS

"Even when smartphones are tucked away in a child's school bag, pocket, or locker, they will continue to occupy a significant proportion of a young person's working memory, leaving it impossible to give their full attention in the classroom."

Between 2012 and 2022, hospital admissions for child mental health concerns have increased by 64%. 514% for eating disorders alone.

With the rise of screen time and social media use in children, there has been a stark increase in low self-esteem, anxiety and depression, behavioural changes (including aggression and violence), inattention and impulsivity and sleep disorders.

There has been a rise in the radicalisation of vulnerable young men, influenced by extremist and misogynistic content, leading to an increase in violence and criminal activity. Young, pliable minds are manipulated on devices which are designed to keep them hooked.

The mere presence of these devices in school impedes on children's attention, safety, security, and freedom to separate from the constraints of the online world, even if just for 8hrs a day.

BCHS

Birchwood Community High School

What difference does a year make?

2023-24

OUT OF SIGHT

No phones in school with an out of sight policy, this had been in place for many years.

2024-25

PHONE FREE

The school became totally phone-free with lockable pouches.



Academic

42.9 to 47.8

Attainment 8 score.

54% to 71%

English & Maths combined pass rate

A 17% improvement. BCHS is the 36th most improved school in the country at this pass rate.

24.7 to 40.1

Disadvantaged pupils Attainment 8 score

This shows how the impact on disadvantaged students has been immense.

Attendance & behaviour

480 down to 27

Incidents connected to phones & social media. That's a....

94%

improvement in behaviour.

1.7%

Improvement in school attendance.

8.1%

Improvement in persistent absence.

PEX & safeguarding

3 down to 0

Permanent exclusions.

100% improvement

246 down to 48

Safeguarding incidents connected to internet, phone and social media use

81% improvement

Other benefits

Staff voice improved

Teaching is easier and students are more engaged.

100% enrichment club attendance

20 mins enrichment during lunchtime with over 80 clubs on offer for every child in the school, every Monday and Tuesday each week.

School library is being utilised more.

The noise of chatter and play during lunch and break.

Children are being children.

Our Objectives

- **Objectives**
- Eliminate phone-related disruptions during lessons and social times.
- Improve student engagement and concentration.
- Reduce safeguarding concerns linked to inappropriate phone use.
- Support staff by removing the burden of managing phone-related issues.
- Reduce dependency and enhance focus.
- Improve mental health.

What are we proposing?

- We have ordered signal-blocking, anti-graffiti, magnetically locked pouches for all students
- We are restructuring the canteen to create an external double door entry point, through which all students will enter the school.
- We will have staff active from 8-15 am every morning to check phones are in pouches and to check on all uniform problems so that any issues are already dealt immediately with and are not spilling into form time.
- We have ordered unlocking stations and hand-held unlocking devices to be used at the end of the day

When will this happen?

The full roll-out starts on Monday 1st June

Prior to that we have:

- ✓Assemblies for all student year groups (7 – 10) April 2026
- ✓Parental Evenings on 15th and 22nd April to explain the strategy
- ✓Ongoing communications with parents to ensure the broadest capture
- ✓In the final week in May we will hand out the pouches and practise using them in tutor periods.

Any Questions?