

Teacher Tapp dials in on mobile phones

Hey there, Tappsters!

This month FIVE teachers will receive £100 gift cards for a coffee house from a list of choices that includes Costa, Starbucks, Nero and Greggs!

Taking part is simple: For every 5 days in a row you answer questions, you will receive an entry code.

At the end of the month, we share the winning codes on our socials and email the winners, too .

Read more about the details of the comp and see the full terms and conditions [here](#).



This week we have a special blog taking a closer look at mobile phones in schools...

Do the rules for mobile phones make a difference?

Since February 2024, the government guidance on mobile phones in schools has been that "schools should develop a mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones...throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime". However, this is guidance, and in practice, schools will set their own rules.

In primary schools:

- 76% collect phones in
- 14% ban phones from school altogether
- 8% have phones out of sight all day
- 1% out of sight all day, unless directed by a teacher in a lesson
- 0% only allowed at break and lunch
- 0% allowed at break and lunch plus when directed by a teacher in a lesson

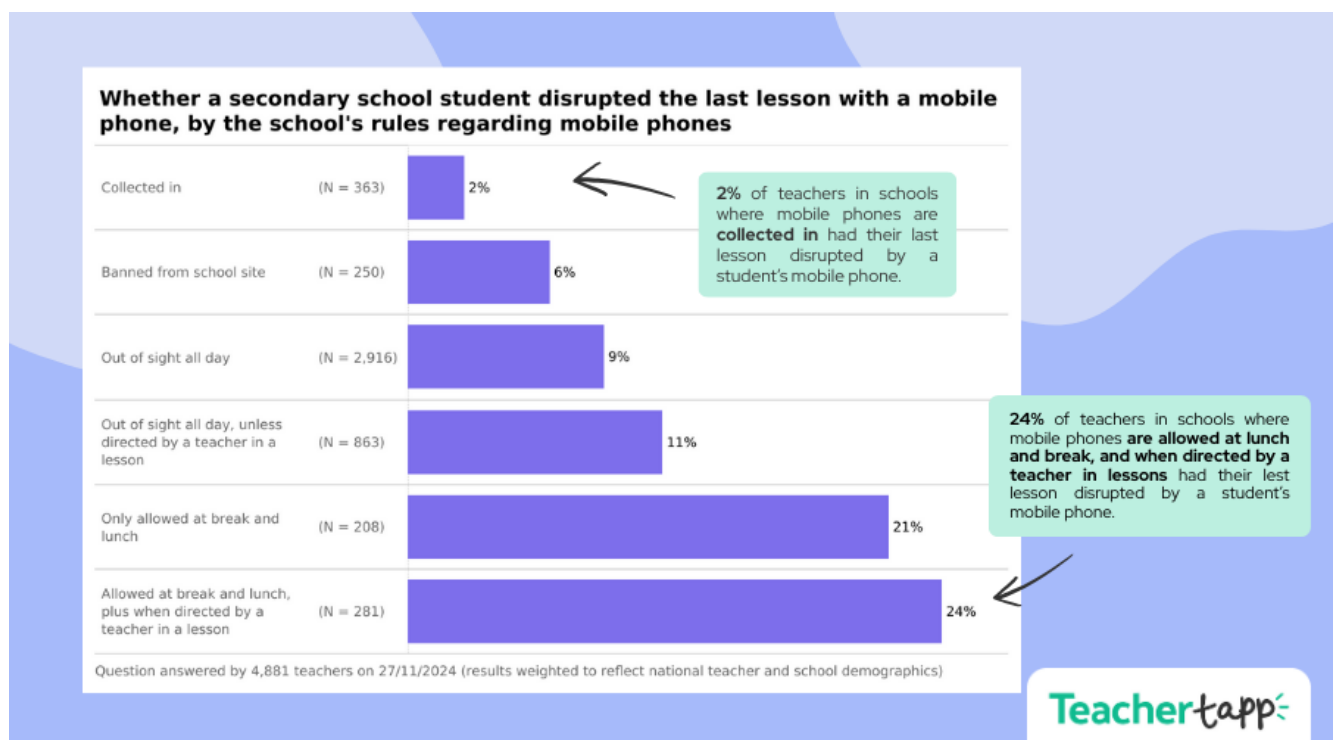
The good news is 0% of primary teachers reported a mobile phone disrupting the last lesson
■.

Now, secondary schools.

- 11% collect phones in
- 5% ban phones from school altogether
- 56% have phones out of sight all day
- 17% out of sight all day, unless directed by a teacher in a lesson
- 4% only allowed at break and lunch
- 6% allowed at break and lunch plus when directed by a teacher in a lesson

The bad news is that among secondary teachers, it's a different story.

2% of teachers in schools where mobile phones are collected in, had their last lesson disrupted by a student's mobile phone. This jumps up to 24% among teachers in schools where mobile phones are allowed at lunch and break, plus when directed by a teacher in lessons.



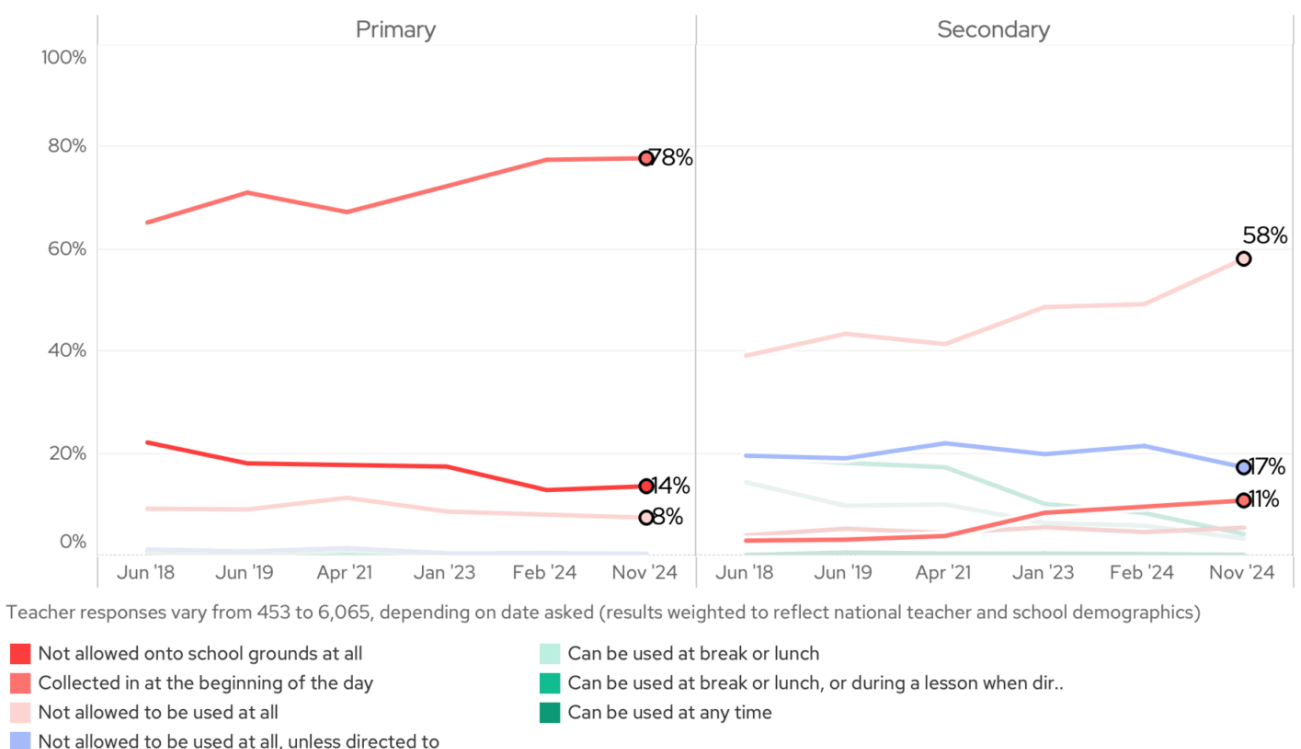
But are rules for mobiles becoming more strict?

In both primary and secondary schools, rules have been tightening up around mobile phones.

There has been a steady rise in primary teachers reporting their school collects phones at the start of each day: 66% in 2018, now up to 78% in 2024. Similarly, secondary teachers saying their school collects mobile phones has risen: 3% in 2018 now up to 11%.

Compared to 2018, the number of secondary teachers who say mobiles are allowed on site BUT are 'out of sight' while in school has gone UP. In 2018 39% of secondary teachers said their school implemented this rule – today it is 58%.

Which of the following most closely matches your school's policy on mobile phones for students?



And do teachers want them to be more strict?

In primary schools where phones are allowed to be brought into school, 70% of teachers reported that they would prefer that phones were banned altogether. Feelings were even stronger in secondary, where 82% reported they would prefer their school would outright ban phones.

Does affluence matter?

Often, when Teacher Tapp takes a closer look at data, we invariably see behaviour changes when adjusting for context for example when adjusting for the subject, or the socio-economic profile of the school.

However, with mobile phones, teachers in schools with high levels of students on free school meals do NOT see more disruptions when compared to teachers in schools with the lowest

levels of students on free school meals (5% vs 6%).

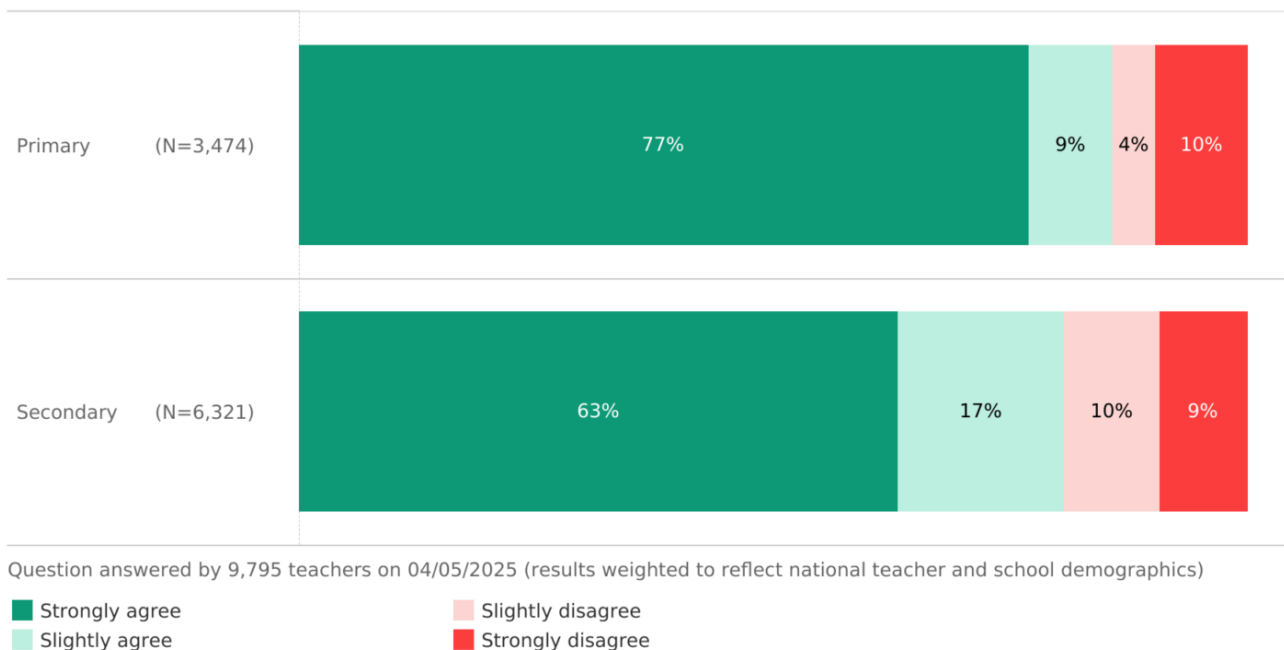
Subject taught doesn't seem to make much of a difference either. Art and other subjects are slightly more likely to report a student took a phone out in their last lesson (13%) compared to English teachers (9%). The rest of the subjects are in-between with very little to pick between them.

What do teachers think about phones in lessons?

Some schools allow mobiles to be used in lessons if directed by a teacher. One argument made for mobile phones in lessons is that self-control should be taught from a young age, reasoning that this is something adults need to know how to do and is a 'real-world skill'.

How do teachers feel about this? The majority are not in favour of mobiles in the classroom: 86% of primary teachers and 80% of secondary teachers agree that phones shouldn't be in lessons.

I don't think students should be able to use mobile phones in lessons



Is this an age thing? Are attitudes towards mobiles different among older or younger teacher?

Not really! Among primary teachers, opinions don't shift when we adjust for age: teachers in their 20s and teachers 50 and over agree that phones don't belong in the classroom at the same rates: 85%.

Among secondary teachers, younger teachers are slightly more likely than older teachers to agree that phones should be banned from classrooms: 85% vs 77%.

Teachers and mobiles

Now, moving from the mobile phones owned by students, to the mobile phones owned by the teachers.

4% primary teachers and 1% secondary teachers work in schools where mobile phones cannot be taken into the classroom, and must be locked away during the day.

86% of primary teachers can only use their phones during break and lunch, whereas that is only true for 53% of secondary teachers.

41% of secondary teachers can use their mobiles as they wish, compared to 8% of primary teachers.

Parents and mobiles

And finally - parents and mobile phones!

Around half of primary schools have rules banning parents from using their mobile phones at certain times.

■ Mobile phones are banned from...

28% classroom visits

22% during assemblies or class performances

6% pick up or drop off

More mobile phone questions?

Anything we missed? Send in your suggestions for more questions!

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Daily Reads

Last week it was the primary teacher who were the keen readers! The most read blog was about...reading! Well, phonics schemes - [what are the popular ones in 2025?](#)

Have you seen a great blog you think would make a great daily read? Let us know by emailing england@teachertapp.co.uk and we will check it out!