

A phone free & safe education in Cheshire



Dan Price
Cheshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

PHONE FREE
EDUCATION

Funding information

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I want our county to be the first in the UK where all state high schools adopt lockable mobile phone pouches.

The aim is to reduce phone-related safeguarding incidents in our schools, cut exposure to harmful content and classroom disruptions, and create safer learning environments for both teachers and students.

Schools already using phone pouches report major improvements (incl. an 80% drop in safeguarding incidents, improved behaviour and academic attainment).

These schools will work to form an advisory board, supporting schools with implementation, materials and learning.

Part of the PCC's role is to commission services that support victims and promote community safety. So I've decided to use up to £150,000 funding from money seized from criminals to support this roll-out until 2028, with additional savings sought including a county-wide procurement.

I've been inspired by Esther Ghey's Phone Free Education campaign and I believe we can see real results in how safe our schools and communities are if we adopt it here.

Dan Price
Cheshire Police and Crime
Commissioner (PCC)

The offer

Up to **£150,000 funding** support over two years.

Access to **county-wide procurement** scheme.

Lockable pouches and training for all staff and pupils.

Funding proportional to percentage of students on free school meals.

Matched funding opportunities from local suppliers, partners and philanthropic sources.

Designed to **help schools take the leap**.

Expert guidance from schools already using the system.

Peer-to-peer support from within the Cheshire education community.

Parent communication materials and FAQs.



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.

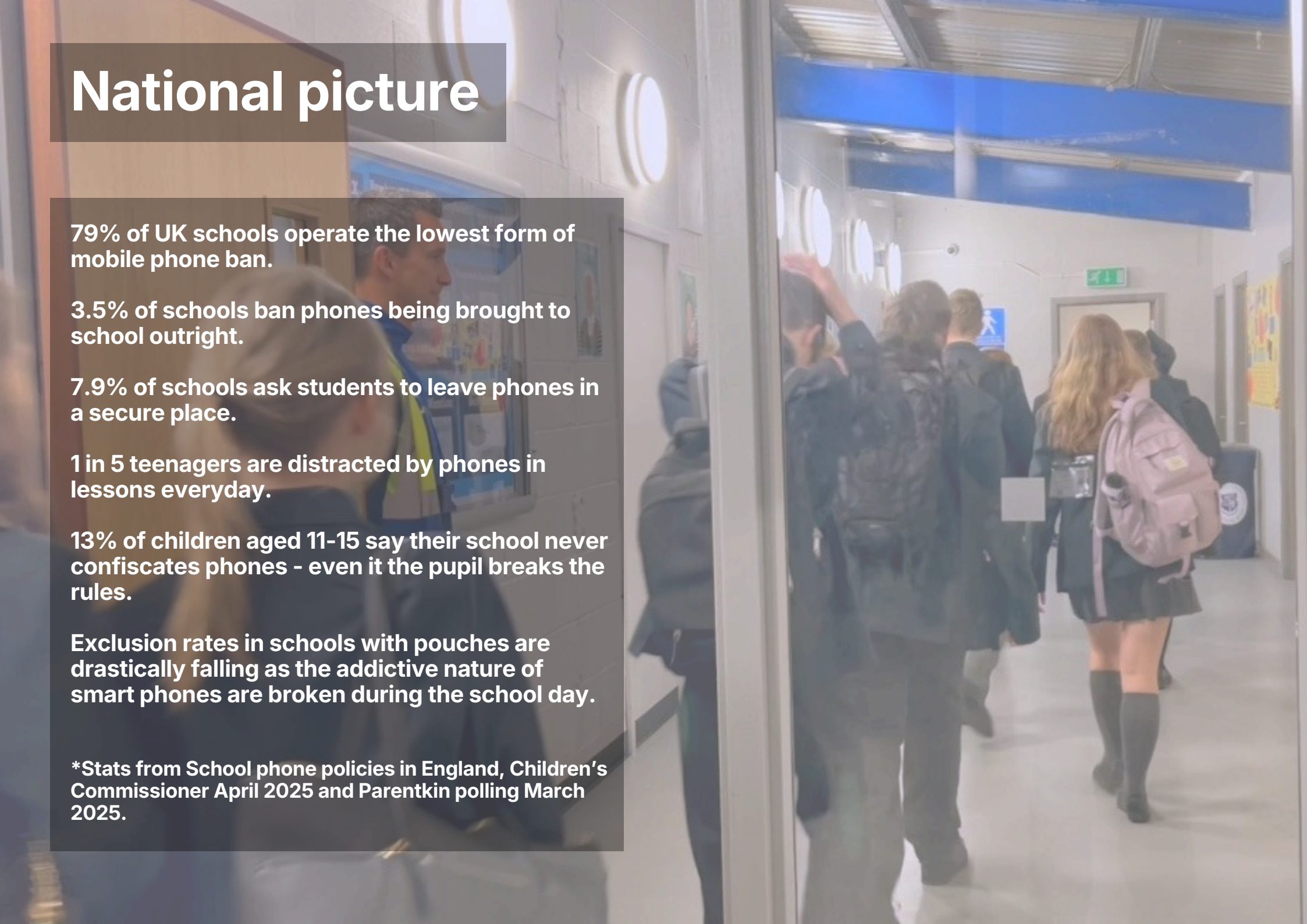
7.9% of schools ask students to leave phones in a secure place.

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

13% of children aged 11-15 say their school never confiscates phones - even if 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.



**Birchwood
Community
High School**

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.

**What
difference
does a
year
make?**



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.



"Brianna was constantly in trouble at school for using her phone. When I requested school records, I found 120 safeguarding logs relating to her phone use, ranging from risks of child sexual exploitation to exposure to pro-anorexia content."

80% of secondary schools in England operate an 'out of sight' policy which we know doesn't work.

Without an effective ban in place, such as locking phones away during school hours, students with struggle with distraction, social pressure and exposure to extreme harmful content.

We are setting children up to fail when asking them to put these highly addictive devices in their bags and telling them not to look at them.

After seeing the success at Birchwood Community High School, I decided to launch the Phone Free Education Campaign. We're calling for a statutory ban on phones in schools, alongside funding for secure solutions to ensure this is available for every single child.

Since launching, thousands of parents, carers, teachers, and headteachers have added their voices to our open letter, showing just how urgent and widespread this issue is.

This is a health issue, a safeguarding issue and ultimately a societal issue. A small investment will have major benefits in years to come.

Making it happen

This is a county-wide call to action. **It starts now.**

If you're a headteacher who believes in a phone-free school day, we want to work with you immediately.

PLEASE [REGISTER YOUR INTEREST HERE](#)

Dan Price
Cheshire PCC



Useful info & links

[BIRCHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL INFO](#)



WATCH the 2 min video of Birchwood High School in Warrington to see how the students start and end their day.

[BBC NEWS INTERVIEW](#)



WATCH the 9 min interview with Dan Price, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner

[CONTACT US](#)

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