

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Education, Children and Families Committee

Does this report require to be approved?  Yes  No

Ref BS

Date 26/05/26

## Mobile Phone Guidance in North Lanarkshire Schools Consultation

**From** Barry Smedley, Chief Officer (Education – North)

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### Executive Summary

Following a motion approved at the Council Committee on 2 April 2026, this report details the Education & Families Service next steps in relation to conducting a wider consultation to developing and implementing a Mobile Phone Guidance in North Lanarkshire Schools Policy.

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### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Education, Children and Families Committee:

- (1) Approves that the Education service now undertakes a consultation exercise on Mobile Phone Guidance in North Lanarkshire Schools during session 2026-27.
- (2) Approves that a further report is brought back to a future Committee with an outcome from the consultation.
- (3) Approves that this report will detail the financial, educational and operational considerations of implementing a Mobile Phone Guidance in North Lanarkshire Schools Policy.

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### The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Support all children and young people to realise their full potential
Ambition statement	(10) Engage with children, young people, parents, carers, and families to help all children and young people reach their full potential
Programme of Work	Brighter Futures

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## 1. Background

1.1 Following Council committee on 2 April 2026, the following motion was agreed:

*Council notes that several local authorities have introduced measures to restrict the use of mobile phones within classrooms. Council therefore requests that a report be submitted to the Education, Children and Families Committee on potential approaches to restricting the use of mobile phones within classrooms in North Lanarkshire schools, including financial, educational, and operational considerations.*

1.2 This report provides initial background information on national guidance for Committee and the Service's intended next steps.

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## 2. Report

2.1 The Scottish Government's 2023 Behaviour in Scottish schools Research (BISSR) provided evidence on the different issues faced in schools across Scotland following the pandemic, where behaviour and relationships have changed. It included information on the detrimental impact that mobile phone use in schools can have on behaviour and highlighted a need for a review of policy to address the following issues:

- Disruption to learning;
- Child well-being and safety;
- Equity; and,
- Inconsistency of approach.

2.2 As a result of this research, the Scottish Government produced updated guidance [Guidance on Mobile Phones in Scotland's Schools](#) on the use of mobile phones in Scottish schools in August 2024. This guidance states that a complete ban across all Scottish schools is not "appropriate or feasible". Instead, it supports local decision-making and empowers headteachers to implement restrictions as they see fit. Key points from the guidance includes:

- Supporting headteachers who decide to institute a ban;
- Providing options for confiscating devices, or banning their use during lessons and school trips; and,
- Reiterating that the ultimate decision-making power rests with individual schools and local authorities.

2.3 The guidance also specifically highlights that the features of a respectful and responsible use of mobile technology policy would fall within three broad categories:

- Digital Etiquette (standards of conduct when using mobile phones)
- Digital rights and responsibilities (what individuals can and cannot do)
- Safe and secure use of mobile technology (precautions that can be taken to ensure digital safety)

- 2.4 The Service acknowledges the importance of developing a policy that supports Head Teachers by ensuring a consistent approach to Mobile Phone use is implemented across all schools in North Lanarkshire.
- 2.5 If Committee approve the recommendations detailed in the report, a full consultation exercise will be undertaken by the Education & Families Service during session 2026-27. This will include consultation with the following stakeholders:
- School staff (Teaching and Single Status)
  - Teacher Trade Unions
  - Pupils
  - Parents and Carers
- 2.6 Following this consultation exercise, it would also be proposed that a further report is submitted to Committee in early 2027 outlining the feedback that is received to allow Committee to consider the options available and agree the terms of the new policy. This report will detail the financial, educational and operational considerations of implementing a Mobile Phone Guidance in North Lanarkshire Schools Policy.
- 2.7 In addition, several local authorities have updated their policies to take cognisance of the national policy. The Service will undertake a review of the current Mobile Phone Guidance Policy landscape and include this in the report ensuring Committee is fully informed of the approaches taken across all local authorities and how this compares to proposals for North Lanarkshire.

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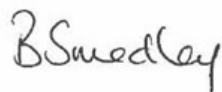
### **3. Measures of success**

- 3.1 The development and implementation of a Mobile Phone Guidance in North Lanarkshire Schools Policy.

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### **4. Supporting documentation**

No supporting documentation.



**Barry Smedley**  
**Chief Officer (Education - North)**

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## 5. Impacts

<b>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty</b> Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?  If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? <a href="https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments">https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.2 Financial impact</b> Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?  <b>Please note, financial considerations will be detailed in a future committee report after the consultation has concluded.</b>
<b>5.3 HR policy impact</b> Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?  If there is an agreement to consider an optional school term then a full consultation will be undertaken with all affected staff.
<b>5.4 Legal impact</b> Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
<b>5.5 Data protection impact</b> Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to <a href="mailto:dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk">dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.6 Technology / Digital impact</b>

Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

**The results of the consultation will have an impact on the use of Public Wi-Fi in schools.**

Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?

Yes  No

**5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact**

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

**5.8 Communications impact**

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

If the recommendations of the report are agreed a full consultation exercise will be undertaken with all relevant parties.

**5.9 Risk impact**

Is there a risk impact?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?

It is hoped that any change would have a positive effect on attendance.

**5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty**

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.

**5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact**

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

**As part of the consultation process, pupils will be provided with an opportunity to respond and share their views.**

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes

No

**Depending on the outcome of the consultation, a decision will be taken on whether a CRWIA is required.**