



SMART Schools Study: Smartphones, social Media and Adolescent mental wellbeing: the impact of school policies Restricting dayTime use

This is a National Institute for Health Research Funded Study, led by the University of Birmingham. This document provides information for *school staff* who have been invited to participate in a focus group discussion. Further information about the study can be accessed on our website birmingham.ac.uk/smart-schools.

What is the aim of the study? To evaluate the effects of different school phone policies on pupil mental wellbeing. An overview of the study can be seen in the following video <https://youtu.be/zwmAXw--Fg8>

Why are we doing this research? 1 in 7 adolescents (age 11-16) in the UK have a diagnosable mental health disorder. At the same time, most adolescents own a smartphone and many use social media. Evidence, suggests that smartphones and social media can be beneficial for mental wellbeing, but the benefits of phone/media for mental wellbeing depends on how they are used. Schools can influence how pupils use their phones and social media during the school day. Some schools permit pupils to use their phones, whereas others restrict phone use all together. This research will help us to establish which types of school phone policies are most supportive for pupil mental wellbeing.

What will I be asked to do? We are asking you to participate in a confidential focus group discussion with 4-6 other staff members, in which we will be asking you to discuss the school phone policy, and smartphone / social media use at your school. Examples of topics you may be asked to discuss include;

- Your knowledge and understanding of the policy and processes
- Your opinions and experiences of implementing the policy
- Staff training, support to implement the policy
- Factors that influence implementation and compliance with a policy
- Your views on how the policy influences pupils' phone use and their physical and mental health

The aim of the focus group is to understand the wider contextual factors that influence the successful implementation of a school phone policy. You do not have to answer the questions if you do not want to. Your response will not be judged and you may stop participating at any moment should you wish.

When will I take part? The school or research team will contact you to arrange the day/time of the session, and this may include times outside of school hours. The focus group will take place at your child's school or online via zoom, with a researcher from the SMART Schools Study. The focus group will take approximately 60 minutes and will be audio recorded. If held via zoom it will be audio and video recorded, with only the audio recording downloaded and used for transcription. The video recording will be deleted.

What are the benefits to taking part? Your participation in the research will help improve the health and wellbeing of future secondary school pupils by informing national policy and guidance relating to mobile phone use.

Will information be kept confidential? All information that is collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. The researcher will record the focus group discussion and all information will be stored electronically and securely. Only the research team will have access to the data. Your name will be removed from any reporting of the findings. Electronic files will be deleted from the system after ten years. For further information on how we store data, please read our Teacher / SLT Privacy Notice on our website birmingham.ac.uk/smart-schools.

What happens if I change my mind about taking part? If you agree to take part and you change your mind during the study, you can let us know at any time either by email or telephone that you wish to withdraw yourself from the study. You can withdraw yourself at any time. If you withdraw yourself from the study after you participate in a focus group, your data will remain in the study and be included in the analyses as it is not possible to separate and remove your data from a focus group discussion. An exception to this arrangement is if the group discussion raises a safeguarding concern, and the lead researcher will delete this section of the audio file before it is sent to transcription and used as data.

What will happen with the results of the study? The results will be presented in academic journal papers and at national and international conferences. We will produce blogs, podcasts, videos and infographics targeted at pupils, parents and the wider public to raise awareness and understanding of the relationship between phone/social media use and mental wellbeing, and these will be made available on our website and sent to your school during and at the end of the study.

What happens next? Please sign and return the consent form below and a member of staff from the school will be in contact to arrange the focus group session.

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Thank you for considering being involved in the SMART Schools Study