

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF SCHOOL EDUCATION,
ANDHRA PRADESH: AMARAVATHI
Present: Sri S Suresh Kumar I.A.S**

R.C.No: ESE02/828/2023-SCERT Dated: 27/08/2023

Sub: School Education – SCERT, AP - Restrictions on Use of mobile phones in the classrooms- certain guidelines – Reg.

Ref: 1.Feedback from the stakeholders during the workshop on 03-08-2023.
2. Global Educational Monitoring Report – 2023 by UNESCO

The mobile phone has emerged as the single electronic gadget that has been consuming class time of some teachers. The social media or other entertainment aspects of mobiles hardly contribute anything towards the syllabus which is to be taught primarily to students in the classrooms. It has been seen that many teachers take mobile phones into the classrooms during teaching hours for their personal use and not for any professional requirement. This diverts teaching time in the classroom to other purposes that are unproductive for the academic improvement of children.

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The Hon'ble Minister for Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh has chaired a meeting on 03.08.2023 regarding consultations on "Promoting Ease of Living through Good Governance and use of technology in Schooling". Among other topics, a detailed discussion took place on the impact of the use of mobile phones in classrooms, in particular, and school premises in general. The general consensus among the teachers, union representatives and education experts was to restrict the use of mobile phones in the classrooms as the negative impact of mobile phones on learning outweighs its utility.

Further, in accordance with the recent UNESCO Report (2023), and recognizing the escalating concerns surrounding the detrimental effects of mobile phone usage on students' academic performance and well-being, it is hereby mandated that all educational institutions within the state enforce immediate and resolute measures to regulate mobile phone usage. The primary objective is to strike a harmonious balance between the benefits of technology and the potential detriments arising from excessive mobile phone usage.

Some key points of global Research on the Adverse Effects of Mobile Phones are:

In the contemporary world, mobile phones have garnered an immense user base of 6.378 billion globally, encompassing approximately 80.69% of the global population. The management of smartphone usage

presents challenges, particularly within the student demography. Research underscores a plethora of compelling reasons to curtail mobile phone usage. Notably, a study has illuminated the difficulty students encounter in maintaining concentration when studying in close proximity to their phones, even in cases where active usage is absent. Moreover, there is mounting evidence linking smartphone usage to diminished sleep quality, heightened stress levels, and compromised concentration.

Within educational settings, the proliferation of mobile phones raises pertinent concerns, centering around their implications for academic institutions. Principally, these concerns encompass:

1. Impact on academic performance:

The influence of mobile phone usage on students' academic performance remains a pivotal concern for educational institutions.

2. Well-being considerations:

The potential ramifications of mobile phone usage on the well-being of students necessitate careful examination and management.

3. Addressing online bullying and safeguarding issues:

Educational institutions are compelled to address multifaceted challenges posed by online bullying and other related safeguarding matters in the context of mobile phone usage.

4. Educator Influence and Classroom Dynamics:

The utilization of mobile phones by educators within the classroom setting has garnered attention for its influence on student engagement. Regrettably, when teachers employ cell phones within the classroom, students' focus is compromised. Furthermore, the adoption of such practices by students as a result of emulation can disrupt educational activities, culminating in decreased attentiveness during lessons.

The pervasive impact of mobile phone usage necessitates a judicious approach within educational contexts. As the research illuminates the multifarious challenges posed by these devices, addressing them becomes imperative to safeguard academic performance, student well-being, and the learning environment as a whole.

Hence, it is here by decided to impose restrictions on the usage of the mobile phones in the classrooms during the instructional hours and the following Guidelines for Regulating Mobile Phone Usage in Educational Institutions are issued:

1. Teacher Obligations:

- a. Henceforth, no teacher shall take mobile phones to the classrooms.
- b. Teachers are prohibited from using mobile phones for personal purposes during instructional hours.
- c. Teachers are required to deposit their mobile phones, set to silent mode, with the Headmaster of the school immediately after marking

their attendance in the morning.

2. Educational Deployment:

- a. If a teacher intends to utilize a mobile phone for instructional purposes, its incorporation must be meticulously detailed in the lesson plan and should be approved in advance by the headmaster. It should be on the basis of explicitly stated educational objectives.
- b. Any necessity to employ mobile phones as hotspots for educational purposes must be explicitly outlined in the lesson plan and approved by the respective headmaster in advance.
- c. If for any unavoidable reasons, mobile phone is required to be taken to the class room for academic or non-academic use by a teacher, prior permission should be taken from the head of the school and valid reasons should be recorded in a register to be maintained for the purpose.

3. Storage of Mobile Phones:

- a. Under no circumstances are students authorized to bring mobile phones into classrooms.
- b. The use of mobile phones by students during class sessions is strictly and unequivocally prohibited.
- c. The mobile phones shall be kept stashed in the staff room or in an area ear-marked by the Head of School for this purpose. This place where mobile phones shall be kept could be the head of school room, staff room, the clerk or any other employee whom the head of school may make the custodian thereof.
- d. In the event of a genuine emergency, mobile phone can be used with the prior permission of the Headmaster.

4. Student Restrictions:

- a. Under no circumstances are students authorized to bring mobile phones into classrooms.
- b. The use of mobile phones by students during class sessions is strictly and unequivocally prohibited.

5. Usage of Government-Supplied Devices:

Government-provided digital devices (including Interactive Flat Panels, Smart TVs, Tablets, etc.) are exclusively designated for educational instruction within the classroom environment and in no case they shall be used for any non-academic activities.

6. Administrative Responsibilities:

Administrative tasks necessitating mobile device usage should be concluded prior to or subsequent to instructional hours (i.e. before 9.30 am or after 4 pm). The marking of students attendance though mobile app, MDM and other prescribed activities shall be done prior to the start of instructional hours. If by any chance any such activities have to be done after the start of class, it shall be done only by the Headmaster or

the teacher authorised by the HM.

7. Enforcement of Disciplinary Measures:

Non-compliance with these directives will be considered with utmost seriousness, leading to appropriate disciplinary measures. If any teacher violates the cell phone usage policy, the following steps shall be taken;

a. First offence: The teacher's mobile phone will be confiscated by the HM/Officer and held in the main office until the end of the school day. Before being allowed to pick up their phone at the end of the day, teacher must give an undertaking to not repeat the offence.

b. Second offence: The teacher's mobile phone will be confiscated and held in the main office until the end of the school day. The Mandal Education Officer will be contacted and informed of the refusal to follow the mobile phone policy. Teacher may pick up their phones after discussion with the MEO and a warning.

c. Third offence: The teacher's mobile phone will be confiscated and sent to the District Education Officer. Errant teachers may pick up their phones after discussion with the DEO and recording the same in the service book.

8. Oversight and Reporting:

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- a. Headmasters are tasked with vigilant supervision and adherence to these directives.
- b. Any deviations from these instructions must be meticulously documented in the notice book and promptly communicated to inspecting authorities for necessary action.
- c. All inspecting officers, whether on regular inspection or surprise inspections, shall ensure to check whether or not compliance of these instructions is being made meticulously. In case of any violation, action against the head of school shall be proposed by the inspecting officer.
- d. If any substantive complaint is received from any other person like students or general public that these guidelines are being violated in any campus then the head of school shall be held squarely accountable.

Rigorous implementation of these instructions is of paramount importance to cultivate an optimal learning atmosphere while mitigating the potential negative implications of mobile phone usage on academic accomplishments and students' overall well-being. Wholehearted adherence to these guidelines can ensure a harmonious fusion of technology in education, with an unwavering focus on nurturing the holistic development of our students. DEOs should communicate these

instructions to all schools through the MEOs concerned and give wide publicity. They shall also conduct awareness meetings/workshops with teachers to help smooth implementation of these directions.

Dedicated cooperation and adherence to these guidelines would be profoundly appreciated. Collective attempts can forge an educational environment that harnesses the positive attributes of technology while safeguarding the well-being of students.

S Suresh Kumar
COMMISSIONER OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

To,

All the Regional Joint Directors of School Education in the State.

All the District Educational officers in the State.

All the Principals of DIETs in the State.

Copy to

The All District Collectors for information

The Commissioner, School Infrastructure, Andhra Pradesh.

The State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, Andhra Pradesh.

The Director, SCERT, AP

Copy Submitted to the Principal Secretary to Govt., School Education, AP
Secretariat, Velagapudi Amaravati.

The PS to Hon'ble Minister for Education, AP