

CELLPHONE BAN IN SCHOOL, IN OR OUT?

by:

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Have you experienced when you were in school, and you needed to use your phone for an important matter, but your teacher didn't allow you to use it?

Cellular phones have been an issue in schools and the debate over banning cellphones in schools is a contentious topic that discusses on the various effects in student life and education. Mobile phones have become necessity today for it is integral to daily communication and information access, yet their role in educational setting is still controversial.

Proponents in banning cellphones in school argued that these devices can be significant distractions, disruption in learning environment and highly contribute to negative social behaviors. According to them. Cellphones become a problem instead of promoting pupils to be more responsible and obedient. Pupils' interest in their studies is diverted to mobile chatting, playing online games, following dance trends, and enjoying other applications. Moreover, it also causes some disturbances in school like class interruptions.

On the other hand, opponents believed that these mobile devices can be also valuable educational tools and essential for safety assurance and communication. With not a lot of freedom in place in the school already, phones are just one more thing that is taken away from students because it believes that these mobile phones are important in communication to assure one's safety. Children are living in an age when things can get pretty scary; they must have a family member or friend to call in case of an emergency.

Pupils still need to make use of their mobile phones in some instances, but their schools won't permit them. Schools are strict in the use of cellular phones since most often they are not properly used by the pupils.

It was June 12, 2024, the Philippine Vice President and concurrent Education secretary Sara Z. Duterte agreed on Senator Sherwin Gatchalian's bill pursuing the prohibition on the use of mobile devices and electronic gadgets in schools during class hours. However, the said VP also remarked that regulations should allow for exceptions such as when cellphones use becomes necessary especially for learning, teaching and emergency reasons.

Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian, chair of the Senate basic education panel and author of the bill, Senate Bill 2706 or the proposed Electronic Gadget-Free Schools Act. The said bill requires the Department of Education (DepEd) to create and implement guidelines on gadget use in all private and public schools and both students and teachers will be prohibited from using mobile devices during class hours.

Gatchalian also remarked and added that mobile phones are also used in mediate involvement in cyberbullying. According to the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment, an estimated one out of three Filipino students are bullied in school through cyberbullying and this problem disproportionately affects male students in public schools compared to female students.

In conclusion, the decisions made in banning cellphones in schools involves weighing potential benefits in improving focus, enhancing social behavior and interaction, and reduced cyberbullying against the idea of imposing this for restricted communication, limited access to educational resources and enforcement challenges. In fact, a balanced approach that integrates technology thoughtfully while minimizing distractions may offer the best solution to this ongoing debate.

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