

France closes in on phone ban in schools starting in September

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French lawmakers have secured a deal on a bill that would outlaw the use

of mobile phones in schools starting in September, one of Emmanuel Macron's pledges during last year's presidential campaign.

Senators and National Assembly deputies reached the agreement late Wednesday on the ban for all three tiers of French education (primary, middle and [high school](#)), except for educational purposes.

Students will now have "the right to disconnect," Cathy Racon Bouzon, a deputy in Macron's Republic on the Move (LREM) party, tweeted on Thursday.

Teachers have been calling for the ban to curtail a growing distraction in classrooms, with nearly nine out of ten French teens aged 12 to 17 now owning a smartphone.

Besides cutting down on screen time, the bill also aims to protect children from dangerous online content such as violence or pornography, as well as cyberbullying.

It also makes it easier for teachers to confiscate phones if necessary.

Each school will decide how to apply the ban, for example by making students hand them over when entering [school](#) premises or requiring them to keep them turned off in their backpacks.

Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer had defended the government's plan in June as "a law for the 21st century" and the "technological revolution".

Critics have called the bill a "purely cosmetic" attempt at resolving the battle schools face against mobile phones, pointing out that schools already have the option of banning phones.

But research shows that many pupils admit to having broken such rules.

And an extensive US study released Tuesday found that heavy use by teens of digital media such as texting, streaming and social networks could be linked to a rise in symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The [bill](#) is scheduled for final votes in the Senate on July 26 and the National Assembly on July 30.

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