

Mobile phone bans in school do not work, researcher finds

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Since the first of August 2022, using mobile phones for non-educational purposes is forbidden in the classroom. A doctoral thesis from the

University of Gothenburg shows that the law is problematic. The pupils need the mobile phones to do their schoolwork and they manage to find ways to bring the phones into the classroom despite the ban.

Pupils' use of private mobile phones in school has been a hot topic for a long time. Many people have been in favor of a ban, which became a reality in Sweden this summer. In her [doctoral thesis](#), Anita Grigic Magnusson has studied what pupils at two lower and two upper secondary schools think about the use of mobile phones in the classroom. She has also studied how a team of teachers have implemented a ban in their classrooms.

Digital tools integrated in teaching

In her doctoral thesis, Anita Grigic Magnusson shows that there is a dilemma between the continuous integration of [digital tools](#) in teaching and mobile [phone](#) restrictions that now have support in the schools.

According to Anita Grigic Magnusson, a ban does not make that much of a difference. The mobile phones are being used anyway.

"The big difference is that at schools where they have a ban, a large part of the use is underhand and also more or less exclusively for matters that are not school related. Even if the [teacher](#) collects the mobile phones before each class, both teachers and pupils tell her that the pupils find strategies to elude the school's and the teachers' rules. They hand in empty phone cases, they claim to have forgotten the phones at home, or that 'it's in the locker.'"

Magnusson's doctoral thesis shows that pupils who go to schools that don't have a [mobile phone](#) ban say that they mostly use their phones on [school](#) related matters, even if they do use them for other things as well.

"A total ban though, that doesn't seem to work. Meanwhile, the schools need to have clear guidelines and a clear purpose for how and when the pupils can use their mobile phones. The [pupils](#) need to learn an approach."

But there are also benefits with the new law.

"The law has provided teachers and principals with greater authority and a strengthened profession meaning that they can now lean towards the law to maintain classes free from mobile phones. They haven't been able to do that before."

More information: Thesis (in Swedish):
gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/73855

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