



Do not disturb:

Review of removing cell phones from New Zealand's classrooms

Technical Appendix



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This technical report outlines ERO's approach to reviewing the 'Phones Away for the Day' policy. It explains the questions we asked, who we engaged with, how we gathered information, and the methods we used to analyse, synthesise, and validate our findings.

This technical appendix sets out the methodology used for ERO's review of the 'Phones Away for the Day' policy - *Do not disturb: A review of removing cell phones from New Zealand's classrooms*. The full report, summary, and good practice guide are free for download from ERO's Evidence and Insights website:

www.evidence.ero.govt.nz

This technical appendix is in four parts:

Part 1: Technical Notes – describes how we designed the review of the 'Phones Away for the Day' policy, the method we used, and the sample we achieved.

Part 2: Data collection tools – provides the five survey tools we used for our surveys of school board members, school leaders, teachers, students, and parents and whānau.

Part 3: Regression models – details the regression models used in our report.

Part 4: Survey tables – these are in separate Excel workbooks and can be downloaded from ERO's Evidence and Insights website: www.evidence.ero.govt.nz.

Part 1: Technical Notes

Part 1 of the technical appendix includes detail on:

1. What we looked at
2. Who and how we asked
3. How we analysed
4. How we synthesised
5. How we checked
6. What the limitations are

1. What we looked at

a) Purpose of the review

As part of its broader efforts to lift student achievement, the Government introduced the 'Phones Away for the Day' mandate. The Education Review Office (ERO) was commissioned to understand how schools are implementing 'Phones Away for the Day', and its impact on student outcomes. The review focuses on upper primary school (Years 7-8) and secondary schools. Views were gathered and analysed from school leaders, board members, teachers, students, and parents and whānau. With this analysis, we set out key recommendations that may strengthen implementation of 'Phones Away for the Day'.

b) Review aims and questions

This review examined the quality of implementation and impact of 'Phones Away for the Day' by identifying what is working well, barriers to success, and what support may be required moving forward. We also wanted to highlight opportunities for improvement to strengthen its intended impact on student achievement and engagement.

To do this, we looked at four key questions:

- How well is 'Phones Away for the Day' being put in place?
- How compliant are students?
- What is the impact of 'Phones Away for the Day'?
- What works and what gets in the way of 'Phones Away for the Day'?

c) Tool development

Our fieldwork tools, including interview guides and surveys were informed by:

- A review of the legislative requirements of 'Phones Away for the Day'
- A review of expected outcomes and impacts of the 'Phones Away for the Day' policy
- A review of international and national research highlighting the impacts of phone use at school on student outcomes

Further questions were designed by the ERO team and broadly considered for internal consistency and clarity. Survey tools were piloted with target participant groups, including boards, leaders, teachers, parents and whānau, and students.

2. Who and how we asked

To understand 'Phones Away for the Day' we were interested to hear from a broad range of people. This report draws on the voices of:

- school leaders
- board members
- teachers
- students
- parents and whānau
- key informants and experts

To ensure triangulation of the evidence our mixed-methods approach integrates:

- a) New Zealand and international literature on cell phone use in schools
- b) Surveys with students, parents and whānau, teachers, school leaders and board members
- c) Interviews and focus groups with students, parents and whānau, teachers, school leaders, board members and key informants/experts.
- d) ERO school Board Assurance Statements (BAS)
- e) Insights from ERO's reviews of schools

a) New Zealand and international literature

Our review drew on New Zealand and international evidence. It includes sources such as the OECD's PISA study on trends in student achievement and distractions in maths classes, ERO's previous studies on behaviour and attendance, and other relevant literature.

We also conducted a scan of literature from key sources to understand how New Zealand's 'Phones away for the Day' regulation aligns with other key international jurisdictions.

A full list of references is found at the end of the main report.

b) Surveys

We designed and administered five online surveys:

- school leaders
- board members
- teachers
- students
- parents and whānau.

The surveys for teachers and leaders were largely the same except for a few questions tailored to their roles. The surveys for students and parents and whānau were also similar in design, with some tailored wording and additional questions specific to their experiences. Full surveys can be found in Part 2.

The surveys for board members, teachers, leaders and students were administered online using SurveyMonkey. This survey was in the field from July to August 2025, Term 3 of the school year.

Survey sample design and data collection

The scope of our school survey was all English-medium schools with Years 7 or above. Māori-medium kura and non-mainstream schools (e.g., special schools, activity centres, teen parent units) were not included in this review.

We used a non-probability sampling approach, namely self-selection sampling, allowing teachers, school leaders, board members and parents and whānau to choose to take part in research. We emailed survey links to all schools within scope, asking for them to distribute the survey to at least one leader, their school board, teachers and parents and whānau.

The student survey was targeted at Year groups between 7 and 13. Younger students were excluded. We used stratified cluster sampling and, as above, distributed survey links to all schools in scope. We asked schools to administer the survey with two classes from a randomly allocated year group, ensuring balanced coverage across year levels. Recognising that small or area schools may not have two classes in one year group, we advised them to select any two classes instead. This approach enabled efficient data collection to support robust analysis using inferential statistical methods.

To ensure a good response rate, we worked with peak bodies to boost survey responses through newsletters, social media and other communications to meet our target response rates. We also sent reminder emails to schools after one week to improve response rates. We monitored responses to ensure representation from a wide range of schools.

We worked with the New Zealand School Boards Association (NZSBA) to boost numbers of board members to our survey. NZSBA sent an email with a link to the survey to 15,000 school board members, resulting in a significant increase in responses from board members.

We ensured a range of school leaders, boards and teachers participated in the survey including ensuring we had representation from all primary and secondary schools, high and low socioeconomic communities, different sized schools and urban and rural schools. The parent and student surveys contained broad representation of gender, ethnicity, and self-identified disability.

Survey sample characteristics

An overview of our achieved sample is outlined below:

Table 1: Overview of achieved sample

Survey respondents	Achieved sample	Number of schools represented
School leaders	383	340
Board members	277	169
Teachers	1,573	190
Students	3,691	145
Parents	4,833	203

School leaders

We received survey responses from 383 school leaders. The characteristics of the 377 school leaders who provided a valid school name is set out below.

Table 2: Characteristics¹ of leaders who responded

School characteristics	Number	Percentage of sample
School type		
Primary & Intermediate	253	67%
Secondary	124	33%
Total	377	100%
Urban/Rural		
Urban	271	72%
Rural	106	28%
Total	377	100%
School size		
Large	126	33%
Medium	145	38%

¹ School characteristics are not available when a valid school name was not provided.

School characteristics	Number	Percentage of sample
Small	106	28%
Total	377	100%
Socio-economic Status (Equity Index)		
High socio-economic (Fewer barriers)	103	27%
Middle socio-economic (Moderate barriers)	192	50%
Low socio-economic (More barriers)	81	21%
Total	377	100%

Board members

We received survey responses from 277 board members. The characteristics of the 268 board members who provided a valid school name is set out below.

Table 3: Characteristics of board members who responded

School characteristics	Number	Percent of sample
School type		
Primary & Intermediate	134	50%
Secondary	134	50%
Total	268	100%
Urban/Rural		
Urban	214	80%
Rural	54	20%
Total	268	100%
School size		
Large	100	37%
Medium	100	37%
Small	68	25%
Total	268	100%
Socio-economic Status (Equity Index)		
High socio-economic (Fewer barriers)	77	29%
Middle socio-economic (Moderate barriers)	137	51%
Low socio-economic (More barriers)	54	20%
Total	268	100%

Teachers

We received survey responses from 1,573 teachers. The key characteristics of the 1,498 teachers who provided a valid school name is set out below.

Table 4: Characteristics of teachers who responded

School characteristics	Number	Percent of sample
School type		
Primary & Intermediate	279	19%
Secondary	1,219	81%
Total	1,498	100%
Urban/Rural		
Urban	1,434	96%
Rural	64	4%
Total	1,498	100%
School size		
Large	824	55%
Medium	512	34%
Small	162	11%
Total	1,498	100%
Socio-economic Status (Equity Index)		
High socio-economic (Fewer barriers)	396	26%
Middle socio-economic (Moderate barriers)	896	60%
Low socio-economic (More barriers)	206	14%
Total	1,498	100%

Students

We received survey responses from 3,691 students. The key characteristics of the 3,593 students who provided a valid school name is set out below.

Table 5: Characteristics of students who responded

School characteristics	Number	Percent of sample
School type		
Primary & Intermediate	1,192	33%
Secondary	2,401	67%
Total	3,593	100%
Urban/Rural		
Urban	3,374	94%
Rural	219	6%
Total	3,593	100%

School characteristics	Number	Percent of sample
School size		
Large	1,900	53%
Medium	1,355	38%
Small	338	9%
Total	3,593	100%
Socio-economic Status (Equity Index)		
High socio-economic (Fewer barriers)	606	26%
Middle socio-economic (Moderate barriers)	2,281	60%
Low socio-economic (More barriers)	706	14%
Total	3,593	100%

Parents

We received survey responses from 4,833 parents. The key characteristics of the 4,347 parents who provided a valid school name is set out below.

Table 6: Characteristics of parents who responded

School characteristics	Number	Percent of sample
School type		
Primary/Intermediate	877	20%
Secondary	3,570	80%
Total	4,347	100%
Area		
Urban	4,280	96%
Rural	167	4%
Total	4,347	100%
School size		
Large	3,273	74%
Medium	868	20%
Small	306	7%
Total	4,347	100%
Socio-economic Status (Equity Index)		
High socio-economic (Fewer barriers)	1,458	33%
Middle socio-economic (Moderate barriers)	2,636	59%
Low socio-economic (More barriers)	353	8%

Total	4,347	100%
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c) Interviews and Focus Groups

To ensure depth in understanding what works and what ‘Phones Away for the Day’ looks like ‘on the ground’ we used:

- online interviews and focus groups with participants from English-medium schools
- online and in-person interviews and focus groups with key informants

We talked with over 65 participants, including school leaders, board members, teachers, students, parents and whānau, key informants, and experts.

Interviews and focus groups were conducted during September 2025.

Interview questions were based on our key evaluation questions, covering how well ‘Phones Away for the Day’ is being implemented, and what the impacts are. Interviews were semi-structured and varied dependent on school context (especially primary or secondary). Each interview was led by two reviewers. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and extensive notes were also taken.

Due to the number of schools involved, interviews did not cover a full range of school types and contexts for all participant groups (e.g. high and low socioeconomic communities, different sized schools, a range of urban and rural).

Interviews and focus groups with teachers, leaders, and students

School leaders volunteered to be interviewed by expressing interest via ERO’s leader survey. After being contacted by ERO, they agreed to take part in a leader focus group. and/or arranged for teachers and/or students from their school to take part in separate focus groups.

These interviews were held online, in small groups.

Focus group with board members

School board members were contacted via the New Zealand School Board Association and agreed to take part in an in-person focus group. The board member interview was held in person.

Focus groups with parents

Parent focus groups were held online. Parents agreed to participate through a panel company.

Interviews with key informants

Key informant interviews took place both in person and online.

d) ERO school Board Assurance Statements (BAS)

Since the ‘Phones Away for the Day’ requirement came into effect on 29 April 2024, ERO has reviewed 910 schools and kura out of 2,249 (up to 30 June 2025). As part of these reviews, Boards must confirm compliance with all requirements through a Board Assurance Statement (BAS).

We analysed BAS responses to determine how many schools were meeting the ‘Phones Away for the Day’ policy. Even when Boards attested to compliance, ERO’s evaluation partners verified this through multiple checks, including:

- Sighted policies, procedures, and school rules
- Reviewed Board meeting minutes

- Checked student and staff handbooks

e) Insights from ERO's reviews of schools

We spoke with ERO Review Officers (Evaluation Partners) to understand how they were seeing 'Phones Away for the Day' being implemented in schools, as part of their school review process.

Ethics

Informed consent

All participants were informed of the purpose of the evaluation before they agreed to participate in an interview. Participants were informed that:

- participation was voluntary
- their words may be included in reporting, but no identifying details would be shared
- permission to use their information could be withdrawn up until 15 September 2025
- interviews were not an evaluation of their school, and their school or provider would not be identified in the resulting national report
- their information was confidential and would be kept securely subject to the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982, Privacy Act 1993, and the Public Records Act 2005 on the release and retention of information.

Before completing surveys, participants were also provided with information on the project, including how their responses will be used. Participants consented to the survey by continuing onto the questionnaire.

Before interviewing, teachers, school leaders, students, parents, and school board members were sent a consent form with an information sheet on the project, and how their data will be used. Participants signed their consent forms and sent them back prior to the interviews (except for the parents, who consented via the panel company).

In interviews, all participants confirmed that they consented to being recorded and were reminded how their information may be used in the review.

Data storage

All data collected through interviews, surveys, and administrative sources will be stored digitally for one year following the full completion of the review. During this time, all data is password-protected, and access will be restricted to the project team.

3. How we analysed

This section details how we approached the analysis of our data, including

- a) Quantitative data analysis
- b) Qualitative data analysis

a) Quantitative data analysis

Before analysis, survey data was collected via the SurveyMonkey API and processed and cleaned in R. Analysis was conducted in R.

Our approach to analysis involved three key stages:

- Descriptive statistics to report on the distribution of survey responses.
- Inferential statistics to test for group differences.
- Regression analysis to examine key drivers of compliance and outcomes.

Descriptive statistics

We generated descriptive statistics to understand the views of school leaders, boards, teachers, students, and parents. Throughout the report, we report the descriptive analysis results as follows:

Missing data across all surveys were excluded from the analysis. In some survey questions, we have a “don’t know” option to allow participants to indicate uncertainty. These responses were included in descriptive summaries and presented in graphs where relevant and meaningful. Survey responses were reported using the original response categories to preserve nuance and capture the full distribution of perspectives.

Numbers and percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, except where rounding errors lead to incorrect totals. In these instances, the numbers are rounded to minimise rounding error.

All results presented in the report are unweighted.

Inferential statistics

To explore group differences and associations, the inferential statistical tests were used. We used Chi-squared tests for the tests. We explored differences between both school-level characteristics (such as Equity Index group, school size, rurality, and school type - primary vs secondary) and person-level characteristics (such as ethnicity and disability) with key outcome variables. All statistical tests were two-tailed, and results were considered statistically significant where $p \leq 0.05$. Only statistically significant results are reported.

Regression analysis

To understand how effective the Phones Away for the Day policy is on improving outcomes for students, and what factors increase compliance from students, we conducted logistic regression analyses with combined teacher and leader survey data. The regression models included factors that were identified in the design stage as theoretically relevant to the outcomes of interest. These included variables that would likely influence our outcomes, as well as school characteristics which we needed to account for to more accurately measure the influence of the key factors we were interested in.

Responses of “Don’t know” were omitted from all regression analysis. We recoded variables into binary (i.e. yes/no) or broader categories to make the regression models more stable and the results easier to interpret. The categories were based on how conceptually similar the responses were, how the responses were spread across the sample, and what we needed the model to show. Results are reported as odds ratios, with significant levels indicated as: $p < 0.05 = *$, $p < 0.01 = **$, $p < 0.001 = ***$. All the outputs were rounded to two decimal places.

To control for school level context, we included the following variables derived from school level administrative data:

School type

- Primary schools include full primary and intermediate schools

- Secondary schools include all secondary and composite schools.

Socio-economic level

- Schools in high socio-economic communities are the schools with fewer barriers (EQI)
- Schools in moderate socio-economic communities are the schools with moderate barriers (EQI)
- Schools in low socio-economic communities are the schools with more barriers (EQI).

School size

- Very small + small
- Medium
- Large + Very large

Specifically, we tested different implementations of Phones Away for the Day, and enablers and barriers had on:

1. Compliance from secondary, and upper primary students
2. Student outcomes:
 - Ability to focus on schoolwork
 - Achievement
 - Attendance
 - Behaviour in class
 - Mental health

The following explains the models in detail. The regression output tables can be found in Part 3.

Regression model 1a, 1b and 1c: Student compliance with the rules

Outcome variable:

The outcome variables for this set of models were teachers and leaders who report that all, or almost all (over 90%) of their students follow the school's rules about phones consistently, by year groups:

- Primary students (years 7 – 8)
- Secondary students (years 9 – 13)
- Senior secondary students (years 12 – 13)

Predictor variables:

Predictor variables in the model included teacher and leader reports of:

- Enablers (what helps to implement phones away for the day)
- Barriers (what makes it difficult to implement)
- How schools respond to rule breaking
- Level of enforcement of the rules
- Exceptions for health, disability and learning support

Regression Model 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f: Student outcomes

Outcome variables:

Outcomes for these models are reported by teachers and leaders who agree that the following outcomes have improved:

- Behaviour in the classroom
- Attendance
- Achievement
- Ability to focus on schoolwork
- Mental health
- Frequency of bullying

Predictor variables:

Predictor variables in the model included teacher and leader reports of:

- Enablers (what helps to implement phones away for the day)
- Barriers (what makes it difficult to implement)
- How schools respond to rule breaking
- Level of enforcement of the rules
- Exceptions for health, disability and learning support

b) Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data in our review included:

- focus groups with teachers, leaders, board members, students and, parents and whānau
- interviews with key informants
- free-text responses in our surveys with the aim of collecting more detailed data on some issues and to provide opportunities for participants to tell us things we might not know to ask about.

Qualitative data was analysed deductively, supported by a structured collation approach designed for targeted analysis, given the small focus group sample. This enabled us to explore to explore key themes while remaining closely aligned with our core research questions, as well as making some meaningful comparisons across respondent groups. Initial transcript analysis was undertaken using CoPilot AI, where clear and specific prompts were developed iteratively to guide the analysis. This ensured that themes and insights related to the implementation and impact of the 'Phones Away for the Day' policy were extracted.

We undertook the following steps:

- a) **De-identification** - transcripts and/or interview notes were anonymised by removing any identifying information such as school names, regions, and participant names to preserve confidentiality and privacy.
- b) **AI-assisted thematic extraction** - de-identified transcripts and/or interview notes were uploaded into ring-fenced CoPilot AI using targeted prompts to extract themes related to the policy's implementation and impact. This resulted in summary reports that were generated by respondent group, for each

research question. They captured key themes, variations by school type and participant characteristics, and included illustrative quotes and examples.

- c) **Internal sense-check** - the project team checked the summary reports against interview transcripts and notes to ensure the themes accurately reflected the voices from the fieldwork. Where gaps were identified, additional analysis was undertaken using more refined prompts (e.g., focusing on student compliance), and additional comparisons were made with fieldwork notes and free-text survey responses. All illustrative quotes identified by CoPilot were checked against verbatim transcripts for accuracy.
- d) **Comparative thematic analysis** – themes from the summary reports were extracted and collated by the project team into MS word, organized according to research sub-questions. This allowed us to develop high-level qualitative statements that answer sub-questions and to report similarities and variations across respondent groups.

4. How we synthesised

We used both quantitative and qualitative data to build a fuller picture of the issues we were exploring. The survey gave us breadth, showing how common certain experiences or views were across groups. The interviews and focus groups gave us depth, helping us understand the reasons behind those patterns and bringing people's voices into the findings.

We used a process of synthesis to bring these data sources together. Survey patterns were explored through interviews to understand the underlying reasons. We also used regression analysis to identify predictive relationships in the survey data and then explored these in the qualitative data to assess how they played out in real-life contexts.

Alongside synthesis, we used triangulation to test and strengthen our findings. This involved cross-checking to assess whether the same conclusions held across different data sources, and where they didn't, it prompted deeper investigation. This added confidence to our findings and helped ensure they were grounded in multiple perspectives.

All quotes used in the report come from interviews, focus groups, or free-text survey responses, and were selected to illustrate key themes.

5. How we checked

The data in this report was subjected to a rigorous internal review process for both quantitative and qualitative data and was carried out at multiple stages throughout the review process.

The research team held workshops to discuss the survey data and the interview results, looking for patterns across the different types of data, looking for outliers that can support causal explanations, and to identify any gaps in our understanding that required additional investigation. This team approach to analysis and interpretation of the data ensure consistency and transparency, and overall rigor.

We then tested and refined the findings and recommendations with the Ministry of Education, international partners, and academic subject matter experts to ensure they were useful and practical.

6. What the limitations are

As with all research, there are some limitations to our methodology and scope.

In terms of scope, this research:

- does not include data related to students in Year 0 – 6.
- does not make judgements about individual principals' or boards' practices in developing or implementing their schools' rules related to students' phone.

In terms of the data collection:

- Survey samples are broadly representative of the national characteristics for schools and teachers. Where some groups are proportionally underrepresented, sample sizes were sufficiently for robust between group comparisons.
- School surveys: Since participation was voluntary, it's possible that there was a non-response bias. To address this risk, we sent the survey to all schools to ensure maximum reach and held the survey open for a long duration, with reminders to boost numbers.
- Interviews: Since participation in our interviews was voluntary, it relied on schools having time to engage with our research team which may have resulted in some biases in our sample. To mitigate this, the research team offered a flexible approach to interviewing, enabling schools to participate when it was most suitable to their schedule.
- Interviews: It is also possible participants provided socially desirable responses, or responses that reflected compliance expectations in the interviews (ERO has responsibility for ensuring school compliance with the 'Phones Away for the Day' requirement, through individual school reviews). We mitigated this risk by ensuring that all data would be treated confidentially, not shared with ERO's school reviewers, and no identifiable information would be disclosed.
- Interview samples: The number of interview participants means that not all differences identified in survey data (for example between different school contexts) were able to be explored through our qualitative analysis. To mitigate this, where possible, we identified free-text survey responses that related to relevant findings. Where these were not identified, we did not provide detailed explanations for why the differences may have existed.

Part 2: Data collection tools

Part 2 presents the following surveys used for our review:

- a. Teacher and leader survey
- b. Board members survey
- c. Students survey
- d. Parents and whānau survey

a) Teacher and leader survey

1. What region is the school you work at in?

- Bay of Plenty, Waairiki
- Canterbury and Chatham Islands
- Hawke's Bay, Tairāwhiti
- Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast
- Otago, Southland
- Tai Tokerau / Northland
- Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū
- Auckland
- Waikato
- Wellington

2. What school do you work at?

3. Which of these bests describe your school's rules* about where students' phone should be?

(*exceptions will be asked about later)

- Phones are not allowed on-site at all
- The school keeps student phones for the day (e.g. handed in to the office)
- Students keep their phone, but the school controls access (e.g. in a magnetic pouch, or a box in class during lessons)
- Students keep their phone, but are not allowed to access it (e.g. in their bag or locker)
- Other: (please describe)

4. Which of these bests describe your school's rules* about when students can access their phones?

(*exceptions will be asked about later)

- Students are not allowed to use phones at any time during the school day
- Students can only use their phones during scheduled break times (e.g. morning tea, lunch)
- Other: (please describe)

5. At your school, how actively monitored and enforced are the phone rules during these times:

	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Not applicable
On school grounds before and after school starts					
Scheduled break times (e.g. morning tea, lunch)					
Moving between classes					
Break times during a class (e.g. teacher sanctioned 'brain break')					
Scheduled study classes (e.g. for senior students)					
In bathrooms and/or other out-of-sight places					
On school trips					
Other visits outside school (e.g. on courses, visits, work experience)					

6. How does your school respond to students not following the school's phone rules? (Select all that apply)

- Students are told to put their phone away
- Phones are confiscated immediately
- Students are given warnings before their phone is confiscated (i.e. a '3 strike policy' or similar)
- Parents are notified
- Students lose other privileges
- Other consequences: (please describe)

9. Does your school policy allow you to use exceptions for:

	Yes	No	Unsure
Phone use for a specific educational purpose			
Senior students during study classes			
Senior students outside of study classes			
Other exceptions: (please describe)			

10. How often do you use the exception(s) for:

	Every or almost every lesson	Once or twice a week	Once or twice a month	Rarely	Never	I don't know
Phone use for a specific educational purpose						
Senior students during study classes						
Senior students outside of study classes						

11. Do any of the following make it difficult to implement 'phones away for the day'?

	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Not applicable	I don't know
Unclear guidance from Ministry						
Unclear guidance from boards/leadership						
Resistance from parents						
Resistance from students						
The exemption criteria						
Wearable devices (e.g. smart watches, glasses)						

Difficulty in monitoring students at all times						
The need for other devices for schoolwork because phones are not available						
Other: (please describe)						

12. Do any of the following help to implement 'phones away for the day':

	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Not applicable	I don't know
Guidance from the Ministry						
Guidance from boards						
Rules are consistent across year levels						
Consequences are consistently applied						
Teacher support of the policy						
Parent support of the policy						
Students understand the purpose of the policy						
The exemption criteria						
Access to alternative devices when digital tools are needed						
Other: (please describe)						

13. Did your school rules on cell phone use change because of the 'phones away for the day' policy?

- Yes
- No, we already restricted phone use
- No, we do not restrict phone use

14. What impact has 'phones away for the day' / restricting or banning phone use had on:

	a lot better	a bit better	no change	a bit worse	a lot worse
student behaviour in the classroom					
student attendance					
students' ability to focus on schoolwork					
student achievement					
on the frequency of bullying at school					
student mental health					
Please describe other impacts:					

15. How much do you agree with the following statements about the impact of 'phones away for the day' / restricting or banning phone use has had on your teaching? The policy has...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Limited students' access to online resources					
Limited my teaching practices					
Required me to redesign lessons that previously relied on student phone use.					
Led me to increase the use of school-approved digital devices (e.g. Chromebooks, laptops).					
Required me to find alternative ways to engage students (i.e. more hands-on activities)					
Increased the time I spend planning or adapting lessons					

Had no significant impact on my teaching					
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16. What could be done to improve how 'phones away for the day' works in schools?

17. What could be done to strengthen the impact of 'phones away for the day' on students' outcomes?

b) Board members survey

1. What region is the school located in where you serve as a board member?

- Bay of Plenty, Waiairiki
- Canterbury and Chatham Islands
- Hawke's Bay, Tairāwhiti
- Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast
- Otago, Southland
- Tai Tokerau / Northland
- Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū
- Auckland
- Waikato
- Wellington

2. What school are you a board member of? This information is confidential, and we won't report on individual schools.

3. Has the board/school taken steps to prohibit students from using or accessing mobile phones at all times when they are attending school?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

4. Does your school policy allow exceptions for:

	No	Yes	Unsure
student health reasons (such as monitoring insulin levels)			
supporting students with a disability			
supporting students with a specific learning need			
Other special circumstances: (please describe)			

5. Does your school policy allow exceptions for:

	Yes	No	Unsure
teachers allowing use for a specific educational purpose			
senior students during study classes			
senior students outside of study classes			

6. Does the school's policy apply to students during activities outside the school:

	Yes	No	Unsure
On school trips			
On other visits outside school (e.g. on courses, work experience)			

7. Do any of the following make it difficult to implement 'phones away for the day'?

	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Not applicable	I don't know
Unclear guidance from Ministry						
Resistance from teachers and school staff						
Resistance from parents						
Resistance from students						
The exemption criteria						
Other: (please describe)						

8. Did your school rules on cell phone use change because of the 'phones away for the day' policy?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

9. What could be done to improve how 'phones away for the day' works in schools?

c) Student survey

1. How old are you?

- Under 11
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- Over 18

2. What year level are you in?

- Year 7
- Year 8
- Year 9
- Year 10
- Year 11
- Year 12
- Year 13

3. Are you:

- Male
- Female
- Another gender
- Prefer not to say

4. Are you / your whānau: (You may choose more than one answer)

- Māori
- New Zealand European / Pākehā
- Pacific peoples,
- Asian
- Middle Eastern / Latin American / African
- Prefer not to say

5. Are you disabled or do you have learning needs?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

6. What region is your school in?

- Bay of Plenty, Waairiki
- Canterbury and Chatham Islands
- Hawke's Bay, Tairāwhiti
- Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast
- Otago, Southland
- Tai Tokerau / Northland
- Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū
- Auckland
- Waikato
- Wellington

7. What school do you go to? This information is confidential, and we won't report on individual schools.**8. Which of these bests describe your school's rules* about where your phone should be? (*exceptions will be asked about later)**

- Phones are not allowed at school at all
- The school keeps my phone for the day (e.g. handed in to the office)
- I keep my phone, but my teacher controls if I can use it (e.g. phone in a magnetic pouch, or in a box in class during lessons)
- I keep my phone, but I am not allowed to use it (e.g. in my bag or locker)
- Other: (please describe)

9. Which of these bests describe your school's rules* about when you can access your phone? (*exceptions will be asked about later)

- I am not allowed to use my phone at any time during the school day
- I can only use my phone during scheduled break times (e.g. morning tea, lunch)
- Other: (please describe)

10. At your school, do teachers make sure the rules are followed at these times:

	Yes	No	I don't know
On school grounds before and after school starts			
At break times (e.g. morning tea, lunch)			
Moving between classes			
Break times during a class (e.g. a 'brain break')			
Study classes (e.g. for senior students)			
In bathrooms and/or other out-of-sight places			
On school trips			
Other visits outside school (e.g. on courses, visits, work experience)			

11. What happens if students are not following the school's phone rules? (select all that apply)

- Students are told to put their phone away
- Phones are confiscated immediately
- Students are given warnings before their phone is confiscated (i.e. a '3 strike policy' or similar)
- Parents are contacted
- Students lose other freedoms or rights
- Any other examples? (please describe)

12. Please describe the types of freedoms or rights students could lose:**13. How often do you use your cell phone:**

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Before and after school starts on school grounds					
Lunch / morning teatime					
Break times					
Between classes					
During class					
On school trips					

In bathrooms and/or other out-of-sight places					
---	--	--	--	--	--

14. What do you think are the main reasons you personally do not always comply with your school's phone rules? (Select all that apply or add your own reason.)

- I need my phone for learning activities or accessing resources.
- I use my phone to manage my wellbeing or anxiety.
- I want to stay connected with my whānau.
- I want to stay connected with my friends.
- I don't agree with the rules or find them unfair.
- I'm not always sure what the rules are.
- Teachers don't always make sure the rules are followed.
- Other: (please specify)

15. Does your school allow some students to use their phones because of:

	Yes	No	I don't know
student health reasons (such as checking insulin levels)			
supporting students with a disability			
supporting students with a specific learning need			
Other special examples: (please describe)			

16. Does your school sometimes allow phone use for:

	Yes	No	Unsure
a learning activity			
senior students during study classes			
senior students outside of study classes			

17. What impact have the school's phone rules had on your:

	a lot better	a bit better	no change	a bit worse	a lot worse
behaviour in class					

attendance					
ability to focus at school					
achievement					
bullying at school					
mental health					
Please describe any other impacts of the school's phone rules on you:					

18. What could be done to improve how 'phones away for the day' works in schools?

d) Parent and whānau survey

1. What age is your child?

- Under 11
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- Over 18

2. What year level is your child in?

- Year 7
- Year 8
- Year 9
- Year 10
- Year 11
- Year 12
- Year 13

3. Is your child:

- Male
- Female
- Another gender
- Prefer not to say

4. Is your child / your whānau: (Select all that apply)

- Māori
- New Zealand European / Pākehā
- Pacific peoples,
- Asian
- Middle Eastern / Latin American / African
- Prefer not to say

5. Is your child disabled, or do they have learning needs?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

6. What region is your child's school in?

- Bay of Plenty, Waairiki
- Canterbury and Chatham Islands
- Hawke's Bay, Tairāwhiti
- Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast
- Otago, Southland
- Tai Tokerau / Northland
- Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū
- Auckland
- Waikato
- Wellington

7. What school does your child go to? This information is confidential, and we won't report on individual schools.**8. How often does your child follow the school's rules about phones at school?**

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- I don't know

9. What do you think are the main reasons your child does not always follow the school's rules about phones at school? (Select all that apply or add your own reason.)

- They feel they need their phone for learning activities.
- They use their phone to manage my wellbeing or anxiety.
- They use their phone to stay connected with me or other whānau.
- They don't believe the policy is fair.
- They want to stay connected with friends.
- They are unaware of the consequences for breaking the rule.
- The policy is not consistently enforced.
- Other: (please specify)

10. Do any of the following make it difficult for students and whānau to follow the 'phones away for the day' policy?

	To a great extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Not applicable	I don't know
Unclear guidance from Ministry						
Unclear guidance from schools						
Resistance from other students						
Wearable devices (e.g. smart watches, glasses)						
The exemption criteria						
Effective communication channels between parents and their child while at school						
Other: (please describe)						

11. Did your school rules on cell phone use change because of the 'phones away for the day' policy?

- Yes
- No

12. What impact has 'phones away for the day' / restricting or banning phone use had on your child's behaviour in the classroom:

	a lot better	a bit better	no change	a bit worse	a lot worse
your child's behaviour in the classroom					
your child's attendance					
your child's ability to focus at school					
your child's achievement					
how other students treat your child					

your child's mental health					
Please describe any other impacts:					

13. How much do you agree with the following statements? The phone ban has...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Made me adjust how I communicate with my child before and after school.					
Made me adjust our family routines.					
Made me feel concerned about not being able to contact my child during the school day.					

14. What could be done to improve how 'phones away for the day' works in schools?

Part 3: Regression models

This part presents the regression results used in our report, including the following models:

- Model 1a-c: logistic regression predicting student compliance with the rules
- Model 2a-e: logistic regression predicting improvements in student outcomes

Regression model 1a, 1b and 1c: Student compliance with the rules

Table 7: Regression model predicting teachers and leaders report that all, or almost all (over 90%) of their students follow the school's rules about phones consistently.

	a) Secondary (all years)		b) Secondary (years 12-13)		c) Primary (years 7-8)	
	Odds ratio	P Value	Odds ratio	P Value	Odds ratio	P Value
Enablers (to a great extent)						
Guidance from Ministry	0.7	0.08	0.5	0.07	0.8	0.63
Guidance from boards	1.1	0.55	1.2	0.53	1.9	0.21
Rules are consistent across year levels	1.5	0.11	1.5	0.34	2.2*	0.04
Consequences are consistently applied	1.8*	0.02	2.4*	0.02	0.8	0.55
Teacher support of the policy	1	0.92	1.2	0.7	1.0	0.99
Students understand the purpose of the policy	1.6**	0.01	1.4	0.24	1.1	0.76
The exemption criteria	1.1	0.69	1.3	0.36	1.0	0.93
Access to alternative devices when digital tools are needed.	1	0.86	0.9	0.56	0.8	0.57
Barriers (to a great extent)						
Unclear guidance from Ministry	0.8	0.40	1.0	0.95	0.8	0.70
Unclear guidance from boards	0.7	0.32	0.7	0.52	0.6	0.41
Resistance from parents	0.6**	0.01	0.6	0.2	0.7	0.22
Resistance from students	0.3***	0.00	0.3***	0.00	0.2***	0.00
The exemption criteria	0.8	0.57	0.9	0.88	1.1	0.85
Wearable devices	1.3	0.21	1.3	0.33	1.2	0.53
Difficulty in monitoring students at all times	0.4***	0.00	0.3***	0.00	1.2	0.69
The need for other devices for schoolwork	1.2	0.41	1.4	0.29	0.5	0.08
Enforcement of the rules (to a great extent)	2***	0.00	2.7***	0.00	3.1***	0.00
Exceptions (yes)						

Student health reasons	0.9	0.72	1.1	0.87	0.8	0.65
Supporting students with a disability	1	0.93	0.9	0.71	1.6	0.37
Supporting students with a specific learning need	1.1	0.71	1.2	0.67	0.8	0.68
Teachers allowing use for a specific educational purpose	1.3	0.12	1.5	0.17	1.2	0.55
Consequences used						
Students are told to put their phone away	0.8	0.17	0.5*	0.03	0.6	0.12
Phones are confiscated immediately	1.1	0.78	0.8	0.56	0.8	0.65
Students are given warnings before their phone is confiscated (i.e. a 3-strike policy or similar)	1.1	0.69	1.1	0.72	0.7	0.32
Parents are notified	1.5*	0.03	1.6*	0.05	1.5	0.16
EQI (vs Few)						
Moderate	1.1	0.60	1.1	0.85	0.6	0.2
More	0.8	0.54	1.1	0.79	0.5	0.13
School (vs Large)						
Medium	1	0.89	0.9	0.68	1.1	0.75
Small	0.9	0.82	1.1	0.82	1.8	0.19

Note: $p < 0.05 = *$, $p < 0.01 = **$, $p < 0.001 = ***$.

Regression Model 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f: Student outcomes

Table 8: Regression model predicting teachers and leaders that there have been improvements in student outcomes because of 'Phones Away for the Day' / restricting cell phone use

	a) Behaviour in the classroom		b) Attendance		c) Ability to focus on schoolwork		d) Achievement		e) Bullying		f) Mental health	
	Odds ratio	P Value	Odds ratio	P Value	Odds ratio	P Value	Odds ratio	P Value	Odds ratio	P Value	Odds ratio	P Value
Enablers (to a great extent)												
Guidance from Ministry	1.1	0.67	1.1	0.74	1.3	0.42	1.1	0.61	1.3	0.27	1.7*	0.03
Guidance from boards	1.3	0.37	1.1	0.66	1.1	0.78	0.9	0.80	1.2	0.48	1.0	0.83
Rules are consistent across year levels	1.1	0.70	1.0	0.93	0.8	0.46	1.3	0.35	1.0	0.97	1.3	0.34
Consequences are consistently applied	1.0	0.89	0.9	0.78	1.3	0.48	1.0	0.98	1.5	0.17	1.0	0.89
Teacher support of the policy	1.3	0.37	1.5	0.16	2.2**	0.01	1.7*	0.04	1.2	0.51	1.2	0.49
Students understand the purpose of the policy	1.1	0.80	0.9	0.46	0.8	0.27	1.0	0.89	0.9	0.61	1.3	0.28
The exemption criteria	0.8	0.47	1.2	0.41	1.1	0.67	1.1	0.82	0.7	0.19	0.7	0.21
Access to alternative devices when digital tools are needed.	1.0	0.97	1.1	0.59	1.1	0.59	1.1	0.58	1.4	0.09	1.3	0.17
Barriers (to a great extent)												
Unclear guidance from Ministry	0.8	0.50	0.7	0.31	0.5*	0.03	0.5	0.05	0.9	0.84	1.0	0.91
Unclear guidance from boards	0.9	0.73	1.5	0.31	1.0	1.00	1.5	0.29	0.9	0.86	0.8	0.50
Resistance from parents	0.9	0.61	1.1	0.76	0.7	0.24	0.8	0.29	0.7	0.10	0.6	0.07
Resistance from students	0.9	0.61	1.5	0.13	1.3	0.32	1.3	0.23	1.7*	0.04	1.5	0.11
The exemption criteria	1.2	0.69	1.4	0.32	1.1	0.83	1.3	0.40	1.4	0.29	1.2	0.52
Wearable devices (e.g. smart watches, glasses)	1.0	0.93	1.4	0.13	1.0	0.97	0.8	0.37	1.1	0.56	1.1	0.54
Difficulty in monitoring students at all times	1.8*	0.02	0.7	0.16	1.6	0.10	1.1	0.64	0.8	0.45	0.9	0.49

The need for other devices for schoolwork because phones are not available	0.7	0.09	0.9	0.61	0.7	0.08	0.7	0.14	0.9	0.67	0.9	0.64
Strong enforcement of rules (to a great extent)	1.8**	0.01	1.6	0.07	1.3	0.26	1.3	0.20	1.9***	0.00	1.4	0.09
Exceptions (yes)												
Student health reasons (such as monitoring insulin levels)	1.3	0.40	1.0	0.91	1.3	0.36	0.8	0.43	0.9	0.59	0.8	0.40
Supporting students with a disability	0.7	0.29	0.9	0.73	0.8	0.53	1.0	0.90	1.5	0.18	1.2	0.62
Supporting students with a specific learning need	2.4***	0.00	1.4	0.19	1.7	0.06	1.6	0.06	1.2	0.45	1.6	0.06
Teachers allowing use for a specific educational purpose	1.0	0.86	0.6**	0.01	1.3	0.28	0.9	0.51	1.0	0.92	1.1	0.79
Consequences used (yes)												
Students are told to put their phone away	0.9	0.78	0.8	0.42	1.0	0.96	1.0	0.87	1.0	0.86	0.7*	0.04
Phones are confiscated immediately	2.0**	0.01	1.0	0.85	2.1**	0.01	1.9**	0.01	1.5	0.07	1.5	0.10
Students are given warnings before their phone is confiscated	1.0	0.92	1.1	0.82	1.2	0.45	1.3	0.32	1.1	0.68	1.1	0.81
Parents are notified	0.6*	0.02	0.7	0.10	0.8	0.22	0.8	0.14	0.9	0.51	0.8	0.18
EQI (vs Few)												
Moderate	1.5	0.08	1.5	0.11	1.4	0.14	1.5*	0.04	1.4	0.09	1.1	0.66
More	1.5	0.24	1.5	0.23	1.9	0.06	1.9*	0.03	1.5	0.16	1.7	0.09
School Size (vs large)												
medium	1.0	0.88	1.4	0.11	0.8	0.20	0.9	0.45	0.9	0.48	0.7	0.09
small	0.5**	0.01	1.1	0.82	0.5*	0.02	0.6	0.08	0.6*	0.02	0.6	0.06
School type (Secondary vs Primary)	12.3***	0.00	3.9***	0.00	15.7***	0.00	9.6***	0.00	5.0***	0.00	7.8	0.00

Note: $p < 0.05 = *$, $p < 0.01 = **$, $p < 0.001 = ***$.

Part 4: Survey tables

The Excel spreadsheets alongside this file contain tabular data of the survey responses used within the main report. Counts will not always sum up to our response total as participants may drop out of the survey partway through. All responses are kept for questions they have answered. These be downloaded from ERO's Evidence and Insights website: www.evidence.ero.govt.nz

