

**Statement to the House of Parliament
First Sitting of the 2nd Meeting
of the 2026/27 Session**

**By the Honourable Rolston Anglin, JP, MP
Minister for Finance and Economic Development &
Education & Training**

[05 October 2026]

Title:

Phones Down: Minds Up.

Tagline:

“Phones Down: Minds Up.”

Mister Speaker, During my school visits over the past year, educators consistently raised concerns with me about student distraction, particularly in our secondary schools. One issue repeatedly identified was the use of mobile phones and other personal smart devices during the school day.

This was not simply about phones being present in classrooms. Teachers spoke about instructional time being lost managing devices, the impact on students' concentration and engagement, and the wider challenges created by social media, unauthorised recording, cyberbullying and conflicts that can move from the online environment into the classroom.

The Ministry's subsequent policy work confirmed that these were not isolated concerns. The evidence identified similar challenges, including classroom distraction, reduced concentration and engagement, reduced face-to-face interaction, cyberbullying and social-media-related conflict, as well as difficulties for teachers and school leaders seeking to manage device use consistently.

Importantly, Mister Speaker, we also listened to our stakeholders. As part of developing the policy, feedback was gathered from 815 parents, 178 teachers, 243 students, 11 school senior leadership teams and members of the Ministry's education community. That consultation demonstrated broad support for clear and structured restrictions on mobile-phone use during the school day, while also highlighting legitimate concerns around communication outside of school hours.

There was another issue that Government needed to address. Although our existing Education Act, Education Regulations and School Discipline and Student Behaviour Policy already provide schools with authority to manage student behaviour and mobile-phone misuse, there was no single standalone national policy providing a consistent framework across the system. That created the potential for different interpretations and different approaches from one school to another.

I did not believe that was the best position for our students, parents or teachers.

That is why, last month, the Ministry introduced the Cayman Islands Mobile Phone (Safer School) Policy.

Mister Speaker, this policy is about much more than removing a device. It is about protecting teaching time, supporting our teachers, reducing unnecessary distractions, strengthening safeguarding, and creating school environments in which our children can focus on learning and interacting with one another.

Under the policy, students may not bring personal mobile phones, smartwatches or other personal electronic devices to school or use them

while under school supervision, except where an approved arrangement or specific provision applies.

We have also been careful to recognise that our students learn in different settings. This includes Year 12 students at CIFEC, Layman Scott High School and other approved education or training providers who participate in work experience, internships, vocational programmes, dual-enrolment courses, college placements or other approved off-site learning opportunities.

When participating in an approved placement, those students must comply with the policies and requirements of the host organisation or education and training provider. Where the provider permits or requires the use of a mobile phone or other electronic device for a legitimate educational, operational, communication, health and safety, or workplace purpose, the student may use that device in accordance with the provider's requirements.

This is an important distinction, Mister Speaker. Our policy must protect teaching and learning without unintentionally restricting the authentic educational and workplace experiences we are providing for our students. Permission to use a device during an approved placement does not remove the student's responsibility to meet expectations around

appropriate conduct, safeguarding, confidentiality and responsible technology use.

We also recognise that no policy should ignore genuine individual circumstances. Where a student has a legitimate medical, disability, accessibility, communication, safeguarding or welfare need, the school will work with the student and their family to put an appropriate arrangement in place.

The principle is therefore clear: personal devices should not interfere with teaching and learning, but the policy must also provide sufficient flexibility to respond to legitimate individual needs and the different educational and workplace settings in which our students learn.

We have also sought to ensure that implementation is fair and proportionate. Where a student breaches the policy, the response will depend on the circumstances. In most cases, the first step will be a verbal warning. For more serious or repeated breaches, a device may be confiscated and securely held until it is collected by a parent or guardian, with further action taken where appropriate.

And importantly, Mister Speaker, we will measure whether the policy is working. The Ministry and the Department of Education Services will monitor classroom disruptions, student engagement, behavioural incidents, academic trends and incidents associated with cyberbullying or social-media conflict. We will also continue to seek feedback from students, parents, teachers and school leaders so that implementation can be reviewed and adjusted where necessary.

I use this opportunity to thank the Ministry's Policy team for their careful work in developing this policy, DES and our school leaders for supporting its implementation, our students and parents who shared their perspectives during the consultation process, and, importantly, our teachers and educators who raised these concerns and whose experiences helped shape our response.

The Ministry has also launched a dedicated webpage where parents and guardians can find answers to frequently asked questions. It can be found at gov.ky/education/phones-down.

I thank this Honourable House.