

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 10287



Introduced by Representative ROLANDO M. VALERIANO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The widespread use of personal electronic devices, particularly smartphones, has transformed the way learners communicate, access information, and participate in education. While these technologies provide valuable educational opportunities when used appropriately, their unrestricted use during school hours has increasingly contributed to classroom distractions, reduced student engagement, academic dishonesty, cyberbullying, and other adverse effects on learners' well-being.

According to the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2023,¹ excessive or inappropriate smartphone use during school hours can distract learners, reduce classroom engagement, adversely affect academic performance, and diminish meaningful face-to-face interaction among students.

Recognizing these concerns, several countries have adopted policies regulating the use of personal electronic devices in schools while allowing appropriate exceptions for educational, medical, accessibility, and emergency purposes.

In France, legislation prohibits students in primary and lower secondary schools from using mobile phones during school hours, except when required for educational instruction or disability-related needs. The French government recognizes that unrestricted mobile phone use disrupts learning, impairs students' attention and concentration, encourages incivility and cyberbullying, and undermines the quality of social interaction essential to students' development.

Other countries, including Italy, the Netherlands, Australia, Hungary, Chile, China, and Brazil have likewise adopted varying forms of regulation on students' use of mobile phones in schools. These demonstrate that reasonable regulation of personal electronic devices in educational institutions is neither new nor prohibitive, but a practical measure to foster a more focused learning environment.

This proposed measure does not prohibit students from possessing personal electronic devices. Rather, it establishes reasonable limitations on their use during instructional hours while expressly permitting their use for teacher-authorized educational activities, medical monitoring or treatment, assistive technology for learners with disabilities or special educational needs, emergencies, official school activities, and other circumstances authorized by school authorities in accordance with rules to be promulgated by the Department of Education (DepEd).

By promoting responsible technology use and minimizing unnecessary classroom distractions, this measure seeks to strengthen the quality of basic education, improve student concentration and academic performance, encourage positive social interaction, and create a safe learning environment.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ROLANDO M. VALERIANO
Representative

¹ <https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en/publication/technology>

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 10287

Introduced by Representative ROLANDO M. VALERIANO

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN
KINDERGARTEN TO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. — This Act shall be known as the "Responsible Use of Personal Electronic Devices in K-12 Schools Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of every learner to quality education, foster a safe, focused, and disciplined learning environment, and encourage responsible and age-appropriate use of technology within educational institutions.

Towards this end, the State shall regulate the use of personal electronic devices in K–12 schools to minimize classroom distractions, prevent academic dishonesty, reduce cyberbullying and other forms of digital misconduct during school hours, and safeguard the physical, mental, and social well-being of learners while ensuring that technology remains available for legitimate educational, medical, accessibility, and emergency purposes.

SECTION 3. Coverage. — This Act shall apply to all public and private educational institutions offering basic education.

SECTION 4. Definition of Terms. — For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- A. **Personal Electronic Device** refers to any privately owned portable electronic equipment capable of communication, internet access, recording, capturing photos, computing, gaming, streaming videos, or multimedia functions, including but not limited to:
 - a. Cellular phones;
 - b. Smartphones;
 - c. Tablets;
 - d. Laptop and notebook computers;
 - e. Smartwatches;
 - f. Portable gaming devices;
 - g. Electronic readers;
 - h. Virtual Reality (VR) headsets;
 - i. Smart glasses;
 - j. Wireless earbuds, headphones, and similar accessories connected to electronic devices; and
 - k. Other similar electronic devices as may be determined by the Department of Education (DepEd).
- B. **School Premises** refers to all school buildings, classrooms, laboratories, libraries, gymnasiums, covered courts, playgrounds, swimming pools, canteens or cafeterias, school offices, teacher’s lounges, school buses, and other areas under the supervision and control of the school.
- C. **School Hours** refers to the period beginning at the first scheduled class or school activity until the dismissal of the last scheduled class or school activity for the day.

- D. **Instructional Hours** refers to periods devoted to classroom instruction, examinations, laboratory work, tutorials, school assemblies, and other official learning activities.
- E. **Educational Use** refers to the authorized use of a personal electronic device for learning, research, assessment, communication with teachers, or other academic purposes approved by school authorities.
- F. **Emergency** refers to any situation involving an imminent threat to life, safety, health, or property requiring immediate communication or assistance.
- G. **Assistive Technology** refers to devices used by learners with disabilities or special educational needs to facilitate learning, communication, mobility, or accessibility.

SECTION 5. Prohibition. — Except as otherwise provided in this Act, students shall not use personal electronic devices during instructional hours.

The Department of Education (DepEd) shall promulgate guidelines on the prohibition of the use of personal electronic devices by learners in the K-12 program within school premises during school hours, including instructional hours

The DepEd shall ensure that private educational institutions formulate guidelines in accordance with this Act and include the same in their respective handbooks and school policies.

Schools may require students to keep such devices switched off, placed on silent mode, and stored in designated lockers, pouches, bags, or other secure locations during instructional hours.

SECTION 6. Prohibited Acts. — The following acts are prohibited:

- (a) Using personal electronic devices during instructional hours without authorization;
- (b) Using personal electronic devices to cheat during examinations or academic activities;
- (c) Using personal electronic devices to engage in cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, or the distribution of offensive or unlawful content while on school premises or during school activities;
- (d) Using personal electronic devices in a manner that disrupts classes or official school activities; and
- (e) Circumventing or refusing lawful directives issued by school authorities under this Act.

SECTION 7. Exceptions. — The use of personal electronic devices shall be permitted under the following circumstances:

- (a) During classroom instruction upon the express authorization of the teacher for educational purposes;
- (b) During emergencies;
- (c) When required for medical monitoring or treatment;
- (d) When used as assistive technology by learners with disabilities or special educational needs;
- (e) Upon authorization by the school principal or designated school official for official school activities; and
- (f) During periods designated by the school for student use outside instructional hours, subject to school policies.

SECTION 8. Responsibilities of Schools. — All public and private schools shall:

- (a) Adopt policies implementing this Act;
- (b) Inform students and parents of the school's electronic device policy at the beginning of every school year;
- (c) Ensure secure and reasonable procedures for the temporary safekeeping of confiscated devices;
- (d) Respect the privacy and personal data of students in enforcing this Act; and
- (e) Provide reasonable accommodations for learners requiring assistive technology.

SECTION 9. Confiscation. — School personnel may temporarily confiscate personal electronic devices used in violation of this Act.

Confiscated devices shall not be searched unless authorized by law or with the voluntary consent of the owner or owner's parent or guardian, except where immediate inspection is necessary to address an imminent threat to life or safety.

All confiscated devices shall be returned in accordance with school regulations adopted pursuant to this Act.

No student shall be subjected to corporal punishment, degrading treatment, or academic discrimination solely by reason of a violation of this Act.

SECTION 10. Sanctions for Non-compliance. — All covered educational institutions who fail to comply with the provisions of this Act shall be subject to sanctions by the DepEd.

Learners shall likewise be subject to appropriate sanctions provided under school policies adopted pursuant to this Act and DepEd guidelines for violations of Section 6 of this Act.

SECTION 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — The DepEd, in consultation with the Department of Health, representatives from Parent-Teacher Associations, relevant government agencies, and other private stakeholders shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 12. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 13. Repealing Clause. — All laws, decrees, executive orders, administrative issuances, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 14. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

APPROVED.