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Greek students return to class without mobile phones

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Greek students went back to school yesterday (Sept 11), as the new school year started after the summer holidays, with their mobile phones kept in their bags. — FILE PIC

ATHENS: Greek students went back to school yesterday (Sept 11), as the new school year started after the summer holidays, with their mobile phones kept in their bags.

The Greek government introduced a ban on the use of mobile phones in classrooms this school year. Several countries across the European Union lately have started implementing similar milder or stricter restrictions.

Greek students can still bring the devices to school but are not allowed to use them during class. Moreover, according to the new rules, students are not allowed to take photos, videos or record audio conversations of fellow students or teachers without their prior consent. Those who do not comply with the rules face one to three days of expulsion from school.

"Let us make a deal on this, and keep it. Leave the mobile inside the bag.

Teachers and parents will help us in this direction," Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said visiting a primary school in an Athens suburb on Wednesday.

"The measure will facilitate better communication with teachers and fellow students," Kyriakos Pierrakakis, minister of education, religion, and sports, said in a press statement.

Although some students were not happy with the new rule, teachers and parents welcomed the step.

"It was time to start limiting the use of mobiles by students, at least at school. Many of them are often glued to the screen even during class," teacher Cia Panagopoulos told Xinhua.

"I understand that parents are concerned and want to be able to be in contact with their children in case of emergency, so a total ban would be more difficult to implement, but it is a pity seeing students focused on the mobiles instead of interacting with their friends during breaks," she added.

"When I was a student, we did not even have to discuss such an issue, but the world and our lifestyle are changing. Children nowadays use the devices from a very early age and addiction is a real challenge," Evridiki Koutourlis, mother of a primary school student, told Xinhua.

"The ban of use in the classroom is a positive step. It may teach kids to start limiting the use of devices after school as well. However, I would not feel comfortable if the government had asked to leave the phones behind at home. I want to be able to be in touch with my kid through the day," she said. – BERNAMA