

FAO All Colleagues
 Initio Learning Trust Schools

15 December 2025

Dear Colleagues

We are formally beginning a Trust-wide consultation regarding our schools in Initio Learning Trust becoming smartphone free.

Our overarching strategic goal remains to cultivate positive, focused learning environments where all students are supported to achieve their full academic and personal potential. In line with recent national discussions and evolving government guidance on technology use in education, the Trust is actively exploring the implementation of our schools becoming smartphone-free.

Strategic Rationale for Change

While our current policy requires mobile devices to be switched off and out of sight, the mere presence of smartphones on school grounds continues to present challenges in student engagement, social development, and mental health.

Research shows that smartphones have become the norm with some examples below:

Research	Source
89% of 12 year olds in the UK owning their own smartphone, 29 hours being the average time a British 12 year old spends on a smartphone per week	OFCOM Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes April 24
The younger a child is given a smartphone, the worse their mental health is today	Sapien Lab, 2023
Teens with problematic smartphone-use are twice as likely to have anxiety and three times as likely to have depression	King’s College London, 2024
46% of teens say they use their phones “almost constantly.”	Pew Research Centre, Aug 2022

Allenbourn Middle School • Bridport Primary School • Burton Bradstock CE Primary School • Colehill First School • Corfe Hills School
 Emmanuel CE Middle School • Hayeswood First School • Hillside First School • Lockyer’s Middle School • Merley First School
 Pamphill CE First School • Queen Elizabeth’s School • St John’s CE First School • St Mary’s CE Primary School • St Mary’s CE First School
 St Michael’s CE Middle School • The Sir John Colfox Academy • Verwood CE First School • Witchampton CE First School



Research	Source
25% of children show signs of behavioural addiction to their phones	Education Committee Report, July 2024

The primary objectives for moving towards a fully smartphone-free school day are:

- **Maximising Learning Time:** To substantially reduce distractions, thereby fostering deep focus and positively impacting academic outcomes across the Trust.
- **Enhancing Student Wellbeing:** To mitigate exposure to harmful online content, cyber-bullying, and the pervasive social pressures associated with continuous social media access, providing robust support for mental health.
- **Promoting Positive Social Interaction:** To actively encourage face-to-face communication, helping students develop stronger, healthier peer relationships.

The proposed policy would prohibit devices with internet access and social media capabilities on school premises. We recognise the need for students to carry basic communication devices for safety outside school hours. As such, we may permit 'basic' or 'brick' phones strictly for communication. A critical component for us to determine, and where your input will be vital, is the practical logistics: specifically, the secure and efficient storage solution for these permitted devices during the school day.

Your Professional Input is Essential

This represents a major step for the Trust, and successful implementation depends on the professional experience and insight of our staff. We are initiating a consultation process across all key stakeholders: parents/carers, students, and staff.

Your views, experiences on the ground, and professional perspectives are crucial. They will directly inform how we shape a policy that is both effective in supporting student safety, education, and wellbeing, and logistically sound for daily operations and enforcement.

How to Share Your Views:

We invite you to submit your feedback, questions, and perspectives on both the policy's merits and its practical implementation via the staff survey - [click here to access](#).

The consultation period will run from 15th December 2025 to 12th January 2026. Please make sure to submit your feedback within this time.



We are committed to a transparent decision-making process. The outcome of the consultation, along with the final policy, implementation plan, and timeline, will be communicated to all staff once the feedback has been comprehensively reviewed.

Thank you for your dedication and your vital contribution to ensuring the best possible learning environment for our students.

Kind regards

Liz West
CEO