

13 July 2026

Dear Parents

Moving towards a smartphone-free environment from September 2026

At The Sir John Colfox Academy, as part of the Initio Learning Trust, we are committed to providing the very best environment for our students to learn, develop, and flourish. Our mission is to ensure that our school remains a place where young people can focus on their education, build authentic face-to-face relationships, and engage fully in school life, free from the distractions that can hinder deep concentration.

Following a period of consultation with staff and parents, working in partnership with Smartphone Free Childhood (<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/>), and reflecting our Trust-wide commitment to the values of Ambition, Collaboration, and Respect, I am writing to inform you that from September 2026, The Sir John Colfox Academy will be moving towards a smartphone-free environment for all students.

The rationale behind this change

The Department for Education (DfE) has provided guidance on mobile phones in schools which became statutory on 29 June 2026. It provides statutory guidance to individual schools and trusts on how to implement a policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. The guidance can be found [here](#). Our schools mobile phone policy already aligns to this approach however we are keen to develop this further in the next academic year.

In recent years, we have observed the significant impact that smartphones can have on young people's wellbeing, focus, and social development. While technology is undeniably integral to modern life, there is clear consensus among educators and families that creating a device-free space during the school day allows students to better reconnect with their learning and each other.

We believe that our students achieve their best when they are focused, engaged, and interacting directly with the community around them.

What does this mean for students?

To ensure this policy is applied consistently across our school day, these handsets must:

- Be powered off before entering the school premises.
- Remain securely in the student's bag from arrival until departure
- Only be used once the student has exited the school grounds at the end of the day.

Communication, support, and medical needs

We are mindful that families need reliable channels of communication. You may continue to contact your child via the school reception in the usual way. Similarly, if a student needs to reach home, they will be supported by our staff to do so via the Hub.

For students who require a smart device for documented medical monitoring purposes, we will ensure appropriate exemptions remain in place. If you believe your child qualifies for this exemption, please contact their Head of Year as appropriate.

Implementation and enforcement

To ensure fairness and effectiveness, this policy will be implemented consistently across all year groups. Should a student be found in possession of a prohibited smartphone on site, the device will be confiscated, and a parent or carer will be asked to collect it from the school office. Further details on our procedures can be found in our updated policy document on the school website.

Working together

We understand that this change requires adjustment for families. However, we are confident that this decision will create a calmer, more focused, and ultimately more rewarding experience for our students. The success of this policy relies on a strong partnership between home and school, and I am grateful for your continued support as we maintain the high standards that define our community.

Yours sincerely



Adam Shelley
Headteacher