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Dear families,

A truly phone-free school from 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2026.

As I mentioned in my newsletter last week, I am writing to confirm to you our arrangements for becoming a truly phone-free school from September 2026.

Current research suggests that young people are spending an increasing amount of time on screens and mobile devices, and the Department for Education has linked this to a range of challenges, such as higher levels of anxiety, self-esteem issues, social and behavioural development, and lower levels of attention.

Of course, our students should not be using their phones in the classroom already, but even as adults I am sure that we are all too familiar with the temptation of checking our phones when we receive a notification. This distraction is increasingly common, and can have a detrimental effect on learning, concentration, social skills, mental health and wellbeing.

You will be aware that we have been working closely with our stakeholders to explore ways we can implement a phone-free system to help our students with this. Thank you to everyone who responded to our recent survey, gave feedback and asked some great questions. We have aimed to cover these in the attached statement of intent and also the FAQs. We have also worked closely with Swavesey VC who have had the pouch system in place for over a year now, and it has been great to be able to learn from another local school.

Starting on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, we will be introducing our HuSH phone pouch system for all students (excluding 6<sup>th</sup> form). On this day, all students will be issued with a pouch and will be asked to use it each day. Students will have an assembly on their first day back (details of when each year group return in September can be found here:

[Term dates](#)), so we can explain how this will work and our expectations moving forward. A brief explanation of this is given, below:

1. When students arrive at school, before they enter the gate, they will be asked to turn off their phones, place their phones (including smart watches and earphones) inside their pouch, and lock it.
2. Members of staff will greet students as they usually do when they arrive at school, and students will quickly show staff that their pouch has been locked. If a student doesn't bring a phone to school, they will still be issued with a pouch and will need to show it on entry.
3. During the school day, except in emergencies or exceptional circumstances, the pouches will remain locked.
4. Parents/carers should contact the school office if they need to contact their child during the school day.
5. As students leave school, they will unlock their pouch and retrieve their devices. Multiple 'unlocking stations' will be placed in transit areas, including at bus collection stands for students who use school buses.
6. Reception staff and senior leaders will be able to unlock pouches under exceptional circumstances.

Based on the feedback we have had from our students and parents so far, we believe this will be a really positive development for the school. 72% of families indicated a preference for the pouch system, and 75% of parents stated that their child would bring a phone to school to have for safety reasons on the journey to and from school. This is the reason that we have decided to provide pouches free of charge for all students, as it then creates a more equitable approach, and parents can be sure their child will be contactable on their commute to and from school and can also be fully compliant with the rules in the school day.

Thank you for your continued support and constructive feedback. We look forward to making St Ivo Academy a truly phone-free school and providing the best educational experience for our students.

Yours faithfully,

Jessica Pearce  
Principal