Impact Assessment Report
(Short version)
2025–26 academic year

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This short-form report summarises the key findings from Blackout's full 2025-26 Impact Assessment across Culture, Evidence and Education.

1. Impact at a glance

About this report

This report provides a concise summary of Blackout's 2025-26 Impact Assessment, highlighting the key findings and emerging patterns from implementation across partner schools. It is designed to sit alongside the full Impact Assessment Report, which provides more detailed evidence, methodology, school examples and analysis.

The assessment brings together registration and usage data, school-reported behaviour trends, observations and feedback from pupils, staff, parents and carers. Collectively, the evidence reflects the experiences of approximately 5,000 pupils across a range of school settings.

Our Impact Framework

Blackout's approach to impact is underpinned by three connected pillars:

Culture	Evidence	Education
Establishing clear, shared expectations that support calm, inclusive and distraction-free school environments.	Using up-to-date insight to strengthen consistency, safeguarding and measurable whole-school improvement.	Developing pupils' understanding of digital responsibility and supporting longer-term behaviour change.

Together, these pillars recognise that sustainable change comes not simply from restricting smartphone access, but from combining clear boundaries, evidence-led implementation and education.

2025-26 Impact at a Glance

195 → 55
Phone confiscations at one partner school

40 → 3
Repeat phone-related offenders at the same school

8-10 → 0
Lunchtime phone confiscations per duty at another partner school

90-120 → 7-10
Average school-time notifications received each day by a selected pupil group

81%
of responding pupils preferred a system that controls smartphone use during the school day

75%
wanted to continue using Blackout

The emerging picture

Across partner schools, evidence indicates fewer phone-related incidents, stronger day-to-day routines and growing awareness of healthier smartphone use. Impact strengthens as routines become established, expectations are applied consistently and pupils develop a clearer understanding of how and why to manage their smartphone use.

2. Culture

Inclusive, distraction-free school culture

Blackout supports schools in establishing clear, shared expectations around phone use, creating a more consistent and inclusive environment where all pupils can focus, engage and thrive.

Across partner schools, evidence indicates that these boundaries are beginning to influence not only phone-related behaviour, but the wider culture of classrooms, social spaces and school life.

What the evidence shows

100%
of responding staff at one partner school reported improved pupil focus and productivity.

75%
observed more positive social interaction during break and lunchtime.

Two-thirds
reported fewer requests from pupils to leave lessons.

80%+
of responding parents and carers at one school selected Blackout as their preferred approach to

managing smartphones during the school day.

Changing everyday school culture

Schools reported fewer visible phones, calmer classrooms and social spaces, increased face-to-face interaction and healthier digital habits as Blackout became embedded.

At one partner school, 75% of responding staff reported positive changes in pupils' social interaction during break and lunchtime following implementation, showing how Blackout's impact can extend beyond classroom focus into the school's wider social culture.

Becoming part of everyday school life

One partner school reported no phone-related behaviour incidents in year groups using Blackout following implementation. At another, Year 8 recorded the fewest phone incidents of any year group. Year 8 was also the first and most established cohort using Blackout. Schools described implementation becoming easier over time as routines became established, with Blackout increasingly becoming part of everyday school practice rather than a new initiative.

"I have seen fewer phones around and none visible in pockets. There are also no notifications or unidentifiable alarms going off during lessons."

Staff member, partner school

Overall Culture Impact

Emerging evidence indicates that Blackout is helping schools move beyond simply enforcing a phone policy toward establishing shared, sustainable smartphone norms. As routines become embedded, schools are seeing calmer environments, stronger social interaction and greater acceptance of phone-free time as part of everyday school life.

3. Evidence

Evidence-led safeguarding and whole-school improvement

Blackout gives schools real-time visibility into how phone policies work in practice, supporting consistent implementation, stronger safeguarding, and measurable whole-school improvement.

Schools can monitor adoption, understand whether devices are configured correctly and identify where pupils or families require additional support. Over time, this visibility helps schools embed consistent smartphone routines, recognise patterns and respond proportionately to individual issues.

What the evidence shows

76.6%
average registration within one week across comparable cohorts.

99%
of invited pupils registered at one partner school, with 89% of devices configured correctly and blocking as expected.

45% reduction
in average daily disablements during one partner school trial.

47% reduction
in devices recorded as ‘not seen’ during the same trial as routines became established.

Strengthening adoption through evidence

Registration data allows schools and Blackout to identify where further support is needed rather than treating rollout as a one-off event.

At one partner school, registration increased from 81% to 94% following structured support and follow-up. At another, 100% of pupils with smartphones invited at launch registered within five days, with registration remaining at approximately 93% for the rest of the term.

Schools also described daily dashboard monitoring by senior leaders, pastoral teams and tutors becoming part of routine practice, enabling registration gaps and implementation issues to be identified and addressed early.

From data to accountability

As implementation becomes established, evidence indicates that pupils increasingly follow agreed smartphone boundaries consistently. At one partner school, fewer than two pupils per day disabled Blackout during school hours. At another, disablements reduced to fewer than four per day, while elsewhere disabled devices generally remained between one and three per day.

Since the introduction of disable reasons in April 2026, school-day disablement events across existing partner schools reduced by 57.8%. Pupils are now required to select a reason, such as illness, an emergency or another legitimate need, before accessing their device. This reduction suggests the remaining disablements are increasingly linked to genuine reasons for access, while the additional context enables schools to identify patterns and distinguish legitimate use from repeated non-compliance.

Dashboard visibility therefore supports greater accountability and more proportionate follow-up, allowing schools to understand not simply whether Blackout has been disabled, but why

Supporting safeguarding and policy implementation

Blackout’s reporting also gives schools greater visibility into how their smartphone policy operates within their wider behaviour and safeguarding approach. One partner school reported no in-school safeguarding incidents involving photographs or videos during Term 1, while at another 41.7% of responding staff reported positive changes relating to safeguarding concerns or online issues.

Blackout was also referenced positively during an inspection at a partner school as part of the school’s wider behaviour and safeguarding approach.

Overall Evidence Impact

The emerging evidence indicates that Blackout gives schools greater visibility of whether smartphone expectations are being followed in practice. By combining real-time dashboard insight with structured follow-up, schools can strengthen adoption, identify issues earlier, and respond more consistently, moving smartphone policy from an expectation on paper to something that can be understood, monitored, and improved over time.

4. Education

Digital responsibility and lifelong digital skills

Blackout supports pupils to develop a more intentional and informed relationship with their devices, building digital habits that extend beyond the school day.

Through clear boundaries, education and ongoing conversations, pupils begin to understand not only what the expectations are, but why they matter. This supports greater awareness of distraction, habitual smartphone use and digital wellbeing, helping pupils develop more intentional relationships with their devices.

What the evidence shows

84%
of responding pupils at one partner school understood why Blackout had been introduced, linking it to reduced distraction, improved focus, and the school's smartphone policy.

23.3%
of responding pupils at another partner school reported reduced screen time.

23%
felt less inclined to check their phone during the school day.

80.5%
of responding parents and carers at one partner school believed their child understood why Blackout had been introduced

From awareness to independence

Evidence suggests that some pupils are beginning to apply the principles behind Blackout independently. At one partner school, some Year 11 pupils chose to use Blackout voluntarily during revision, applying structured smartphone boundaries beyond compulsory school use to support their own focus and learning. Pupils at another school expressed an interest in using Blackout in their own time.

Pupil feedback also indicates early changes beyond the classroom, including more time spent on hobbies, increased face-to-face socialising and less pressure to check or be on their phones. These remain early pupil perceptions, but provide encouraging evidence of healthier digital habits beginning to extend beyond the school day.

Turning reflection into action

Blackout's wider digital wellbeing education gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their own technology use and identify practical changes they can make.

Following a Digital Detox Day involving 280 Year 8 pupils:

~80% pledged to reduce their screen time
~Two-thirds committed to improving night-time smartphone habits and sleep
70%+ committed to spending more time on hobbies and offline activities

These commitments demonstrate how structured reflection can help pupils move from general awareness of digital wellbeing towards identifying specific, realistic changes in their own lives.

Learning beyond the screen

Across Digital Detox Days delivered at three partner schools, recurring themes included pupils feeling calmer, experiencing a reduced urge to check their smartphones, becoming more aware of their digital habits and recognising meaningful offline alternatives.

Combined with everyday smartphone boundaries, these experiences help pupils understand the purpose behind behavioural expectations rather than experiencing them simply as a restriction.

Overall Education Impact

Emerging evidence indicates that Blackout is supporting pupils to move from understanding smartphone boundaries to reflecting on and managing their own digital habits. By combining consistent boundaries with education, pupil voice and meaningful screen-free experiences, Blackout aims to build the awareness and personal responsibility needed for healthier, more intentional relationships with technology over the longer term.

5. What We Have Learnt

Building sustainable change

Evidence gathered throughout 2025-26 shows that successful implementation depends on more than technology alone. The strongest outcomes are seen where Blackout is embedded within a wider whole-school approach, combining clear expectations, visible leadership, consistent routines, evidence-led follow-up and digital wellbeing education.

What supports successful implementation

👥 Visible leadership & clear ownership Clear responsibility across senior leaders, pastoral teams and tutors helps reinforce expectations, monitor progress and maintain consistent implementation.	**🚀 A phased, supported rollout** Protected time for communication, setup, troubleshooting and follow-up helps establish strong routines and makes implementation progressively easier.
🔄 Consistent everyday routines Regular dashboard monitoring, tutor-time checks and targeted follow-up help identify issues early and embed Blackout into everyday school practice.	**💬 Clear communication & engagement** Assemblies, tutor resources, and communication with families help pupils understand the expectations and why they matter, building engagement and buy-in.
📊 Evidence-led improvement Registration and usage data, combined with pupil and staff feedback, enable schools to target support, respond to emerging issues and refine implementation over time.	**💡 Education alongside boundaries** Digital wellbeing education helps pupils connect smartphone boundaries with focus, wellbeing and positive relationships, supporting understanding and longer-term behaviour change.

Overall Impact

Across partner schools, the 2025-26 evidence presents a consistent emerging picture: Blackout is helping schools reduce smartphone-related disruption, strengthen implementation of phone policies and create calmer, more focused environments.

Through Culture, schools are establishing clearer and increasingly normalised expectations around smartphone use. Through Evidence, leaders have greater visibility of whether those expectations are working in practice and where further support is required. Through Education, pupils are developing a stronger understanding of distraction, digital wellbeing and how to manage their own smartphone use more intentionally.

The evidence also shows that impact strengthens over time. As routines become established, phone-related incidents and disablements reduce, implementation requires fewer reminders, and smartphone boundaries become increasingly embedded within everyday school life.

Taken together, the findings indicate that Blackout's greatest impact comes not from restricting access to smartphones alone, but from combining technology, culture, evidence and education to support sustainable behaviour change. The 2025-26 findings provide a strong foundation for continued implementation, evaluation and development as Blackout expands across more schools and pupils.

blackout
EDUCATION