



18th March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to share our response to the updated Department for Education guidance issued in January 2026, which states that *“all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default.”*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools>

Our recent parent and carer survey gave us a very clear message. Almost all respondents told us their child owns a smartphone (97.6%), and most bring it to school (92%). However, more than 80% said mobile phones are not needed during the school day and that stronger restrictions would be beneficial. Many raised concerns about screen time, distractions in lessons, peer pressure, and the impact of constant online connectivity on young people's wellbeing. Parents agreed that removing phones during the day would reduce social pressure and help students focus on learning and healthy, face-to-face interactions.

Respondents also made clear that connectivity before and after school remains important for safety, travel, and communication, and we fully agree! We also recognise our responsibility to help students and families understand how to manage smart technology, emerging AI tools, and an always-connected world safely and appropriately. Our aim is to help students develop healthy and balanced habits.

Our intended approach will allow students to bring their phones to school, but devices will be stored securely in a sealed pouch that students keep in their bags throughout the school day. After successful trials within our Trust, we plan to introduce the Hush Pouch system for all students in Years 7–11 **from September 2026**.

This approach will help us to:

- Support students' mental health and wellbeing through six and a half phone-free hours each day.
- Create a calm and focused learning environment, free from disruption and online pressure.
- Encourage positive, in-person social interactions at break and lunchtime.

Over the coming weeks, we will run pilot trials and share further information about how the system will work, including practical guidance and opportunities to give feedback. An information webinar is being planned for April for families of students in Years 7–10, more information will follow. We have worked with our Academy Council and partner schools in Meridian Trust to produce a set of frequently asked questions which I have drafted for you in the following pages. This is based on the experiences of schools already using the Hush Pouch system. While not exhaustive, we hope it offers clear guidance on how the system will work.

We will continue to gather feedback throughout our trial periods and publish final guidance by June. Thank you, as always, for your support as we continue to create the healthiest possible learning environment for our students.

With kind regards.

Sam Farmer
Principal



Stratton School - A Truly Phone-free School!

Frequently Asked Questions – Draft Guidance March 2026

How huSH works...



When entering the school premises, students slide their phone into the huSH pouch.



Once pushed into the pouch, simply engage the locking pin.



When exiting the premises, click pouch open at a huSH unlocking station.

About the Pouches

Do students buy the pouch?

Students *rent* the pouch for their time at Stratton School. They return it when they leave (usually after Year 11 exams).

What if my child loses their pouch?

Replacement pouches cost **£15** and can be ordered through the MCAS app. Financial support is available for students receiving Pupil Premium.

Is the school responsible if a device is damaged inside the pouch?

No. Pouches are padded and protect phones during normal school use. Students remain responsible for their devices.

Can the pouch be used at home?

Yes, but it cannot be unlocked until students return to school.

What if the pouch gets wet?

It is water-repellent and fine with spills, but not fully waterproof—so some care is still needed.

Using Phones During the School Day

How does the system work at the start of the day?

Students unlock their pouch at the front of school, place their phone inside, and lock it before entering the site.

What happens at the end of the day?

Unlocking stations will be located:

- At the front of school
- In the playground
- Near the bike sheds (close to bus collection points)

Will my child miss their bus?

No. Other schools using pouches report no issues. We will have multiple unlocking stations to keep queues moving.

What if my child forgets to unlock their pouch?

The site is open until 4pm. They can return to unlock it, or wait until the next day. We have been told from other schools that this rarely happens!

What if my child doesn't bring a phone to school?

They will still be issued a pouch, which should remain in their school bag.

Arriving Late / Leaving School

What if my child arrives late due to an appointment?

Reception has an unlocking station so students can secure their phone when they sign in.

What if my child needs to leave school during the day?

Reception will unlock the pouch before they leave.

Medical Needs

What if my child needs their phone for a medical condition (e.g., diabetes)?

Students with a verified medical need will receive a **Velcro medical pouch**. Use will be permitted for medical needs, but evidence will be required from a medical professional.

Communication During the School Day

How can I contact my child?

Your child's **SSA** is the first point of contact. If unavailable, reception will pass a message to the House Team. Parents are reminded that direct phone contact during the school day to a student device is not part of the current school policy.

How will my child contact me in an emergency?

Students can visit their House Office Hub or Main Reception. These are open throughout the day, including breaks and lunch.

Rules and Consequences

What happens if a mobile phone is seen outside the pouch?

It will be **confiscated**. The updated policy is being written and will follow Trust and local school practice. Parents will be consulted, but we are expecting the confiscation periods to be longer.

What if a child brings two phones?

There is no reason for this. Any phone seen will be confiscated.

Do schools have the right to confiscate phones?

Yes. This is supported by Department for Education guidance on *Searching, Screening and Confiscation*.

[Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#)

Checks and Safeguarding

Will staff check what is in the pouches?

Yes. Spot checks will be carried out by trained staff, in line with national guidance. [Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#)

Clubs, Activities & Daily Life

What if my child attends an after-school club?

They will unlock their pouch after the club ends.

Will staff help students who struggle with coordination?

Yes. Staff are always on duty at the start and end of the day to support students.

What if a student arrives without their pouch?

They will collect a temporary pouch from their House Office. This will be treated like forgetting PE kit or homework.

Emergencies

How will the school contact parents in a serious incident?

Parents will be informed via **MCAS**. Guidance from police and agencies stresses that communication must be accurate and come from a central, official source.

How We Will Measure Success

We will monitor:

- Reduced phone confiscations
- Improved focus and engagement in lessons
- Student and staff survey feedback
- Day-to-day observations of behaviour and social interactions