



18th March 2026

Dear Students,

We want to let you know about an important change happening in all schools due to updated national guidance, and how Stratton is planning to respond. In February 2026, the Department for Education updated its guidance to state that all schools should be *“mobile-phone-free environments by default; anything other than this should be by exception only.”* This means phones should not be used, seen, or cause distractions in lessons or around school. There of course would be exceptions for students who need to use their phone for medical reasons, such as blood sugar monitoring.

After listening to your teachers, your families, and student voice groups, it's clear that our current approach needs to develop so that we meet the new guidance and give you the best possible support during the school day. As such, to help prioritise your wellbeing, and to meet the updated national expectations, we are exploring the introduction of Hush Pouches for students in Years 7–11 **from September 2026**. Current Year 11 and Matt King students are included in this message for information only. We have put together a guide to explain what this change could mean for you.

What is a Hush Pouch?

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.



What this means for you

- In September, you will be given a Hush Pouch **free of charge** to keep over your time at Stratton School
- You can still **bring your phone to school**.
- When you arrive, you will **lock your phone in your Hush Pouch** before entering the school site.
- You will keep the pouch **in your bag all day**.
- At the end of the day, you will unlock it at one of the stations around school.

This system is already used successfully in other schools in Meridian Trust, and we've learned a lot from what works well elsewhere.

Why we are doing this

We want Stratton to be a place where you can:

- Focus better in and around the school
- Enjoy break and lunchtime without online pressure or fear of cameras, videos or distractions from notifications
- Spend time with friends face-to-face
- Protect your mental health by having a break from notifications and social media
- Feel calmer and less distracted during the day
- Have a guaranteed 6 and a ½ hours (8:40 – 3:10) of disconnection - this gives you a chance to reset, think clearly, and be fully present.

We also know phones are important before and after school for safety, communication, and travel. This change does not remove your phone from you, it just pauses your interactions during the school day.

What happens next

Over the next few weeks, we'll be:

- Running small trials with selected students and listening to feedback to develop this plan
- Sharing more information with you during tutor time and assemblies in the coming weeks
- Asking for your feedback on how we can make this work smoothly
- Hosting a webinar for families so they understand the system too

Full guidance will be published later on this year, once we are fully satisfied this is the correct approach and all logistics have been covered.

Want to know more?

We will talk you through everything in school before September. At the end of this update, there is a copy of the FAQs we sent to your parents a few moments ago.

What this change is NOT

This is not an anti-technology policy. Stratton is a school that values technology, digital learning, and the skills you need for the modern world. We know that phones, tablets, laptops, and AI tools can be powerful for learning, creativity, and future careers and we embrace that. This change is simply about removing the distraction of smartphones during the school day so that you can focus, think clearly, protect your wellbeing, and make the most of your time in school.

You will still use school technology in lessons, continue developing digital skills, and learn how to use technology safely and responsibly.

Thanks for your understanding as we work together to make Stratton a calmer, healthier, and more focused place to learn. You deserve a school day where you can do your best and enjoy spending time with your friends, without your phone getting in the way.

Mr Farmer
Principal

FAQs

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