

## Swavesey Village College - A Truly Phone-free School

### Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Answer
<b><i>I need to be in contact with my child during the school day. How will this be possible if they cannot access their phones?</i></b>	Your child's SSA should be the first point of call if you need to contact your child. If the SSA is unavailable the school reception will be able to get a message to the SSA very quickly.
<b><i>How will my child contact me if they need to?</i></b>	All students can access any one of the six House Offices which are open during the school day including breaks and lunches. In most cases, the SSA will contact the parents/carers on the student's behalf, but may, in exceptional circumstances and at their own professional discretion, allow the student to contact their parent/carer using the House Office phone.
<b><i>How does this new approach work at the start of the day?</i></b>	Students lock their phone, smart watch and headphones in the pouch before they enter the school site. This is either at the front of school, or at the bus park. They will show the locked pouch to the member of staff on duty as they enter school.
<b><i>How will my child be able to access their bus pass at the end of the day?</i></b>	The pouches will be unlocked after school at either the front of the school or the bus park. There will be a minimum of two unlocking stations for every bus to ensure this can be done quickly and safely. Staff will be on duty to supervise this process.
<b><i>What happens if my child is late to school due to a medical appointment?</i></b>	When your child arrives at school, they can show their locked pouch at reception when they arrive at school.
<b><i>What happens if my child needs to leave school during the day?</i></b>	Reception will have an unlocking device. If your child is leaving school before 3:10, their pouch can be unlocked there.
<b><i>What happens if my child does not put their device in the pouch and it is seen on the school site?</i></b>	Any device which is seen will be confiscated in line with Appendix 7 of the SVC Behaviour Policy.
<b><i>Where students currently use their phones for educational reasons will this be allowed?</i></b>	No, the school will provide the necessary equipment for taking photos or videos so that student phones will not be required.
<b><i>What happens if my child is staying after school for a club or activity?</i></b>	Devices will only be pouched between 8:45am and 3:10pm, so students will be able to unlock their pouch before, or after a school club or activity.
<b><i>What happens if my child forgets to unlock their pouch at the end of the day?</i></b>	The school site is open until 8pm. If they forget to open their pouch at the end of the day, they could return to school to access an unlocking device.
<b><i>What if my child currently uses their phone in school due to a medical need (such as diabetes)</i></b>	Where a student has a specific medical need, which requires them to have access to their phone, they will be provided with a Velcro medical pouch in which to store their devices. Evidence of need must be provided from a medical professional.

<b><i>What happens if my child loses their pouch at home?</i></b>	Replacement pouches will cost £15 per pouch and can be ordered through parent pay. Financial support will be available for those in receipt of Pupil Premium funding.
<b><i>Can parents make a voluntary contribution to the cost of these pouches?</i></b>	Yes, the school will accept a voluntary contribution up to a maximum of £10 per student.
<b><i>My child has coordination issues and will struggle to get their devices in or out of the pouch without support.</i></b>	Members of staff will always be on duty at the start and ends of the school day to help students if required.
<b><i>What if my child does not bring their phone to school?</i></b>	We will issue a pouch to all students. If your child does not bring their phone to school, they should keep their pouch in their school bag.
<b><i>Do schools have the right to confiscate pupils' or parents' private property?</i></b>	The Secretary of State for Education gives schools the right to confiscate items that are detailed as prohibited in school rules. The full guidance document on <a href="#">Searching, screening and confiscation in schools</a> can be found here.
<b><i>What happens if a child arrives to school without their pouch?</i></b>	Students will go to their House Office to pick up a replacement pouch. These will be clearly labelled as replacement pouches.
<b><i>What happens if a child brings two phones to school?</i></b>	There is no reason for a student to bring two phones to school. If any device is seen, it will be confiscated in line with the SVC Behaviour Policy.
<b><i>Will staff check what is in the pouches?</i></b>	Yes, spot checks will be used to ensure that the pouches are being used to correctly store phones and devices. Spot checks can take place in line with the Secretary of State's guidance on <a href="#">Searching, screening and confiscation in schools</a> .
<b><i>Will children miss their buses due to queuing to unlock their pouches?</i></b>	There will be many unlocking devices positioned at the Bus Park. From our observations of other schools who use pouches, we do not envisage this being an issue.
<b><i>Will there be a health and safety risk due to students jostling to unlock pouches?</i></b>	No, we will have a large, proportionate number of unlocking stations to ensure the end of the day is calm at both the front of school and the Bus Park. There is always staff on duty to supervise in this area at the end of the school day.
<b><i>What happens if my child arrives to school, and their pouch is locked, and they cannot put their phone in?</i></b>	This is a common issue. There will be unlocking devices available at the start of school for this reason.
<b><i>Is this a good use of school funds?</i></b>	Yes, we believe that the positives of a truly phone free school do represent good value for money. Additionally, this cost does not affect any planned spending on core education provision. The cost is £3 per student per year of their schooling. We are also seeking support from local businesses to further lower the cost to the school.

<p><b>What happens if a device is confiscated in the run up to the school holidays?</b></p>	<p>Initially, confiscation is until the end of the following school day, except Friday, where it will be returned at the end of the Principal's Detention.</p> <p>From September, where a collection day would fall in the school holidays or on a Bank Holiday, a student will be allowed to collect their device at the end of the school day on the final day of term / half term.</p>
<p><b>What evidence is there which supports this approach to reducing distractions and improving focus?</b></p>	<p>The government expects that schools in England prevent the use of mobile phones in schools and sets out the rationale for this <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p><i>As teaching professionals, we know that removal of extraneous distraction in the classroom is essential, so that working memory is not overloaded. This is especially important for our most vulnerable students.<sup>1</sup></i></p> <p><i>In addition to this, recent studies have shown a link between screentime and worse mental health, especially in children and young people, and we are keen to do what we can to improve this for our students.<sup>2 3</sup></i></p>
<p><b>How will the school know if this new approach is working?</b></p>	<p>We collect data on student focus and engagement as part of regular lesson drop-ins and observations, and we will evaluate if we observe an improvement in student engagement. We will also survey students and staff to see if there is a change in student focus and concentration in lessons.</p> <p>We will gather data on the number of confiscations per week and expect to see a reduction in the number of confiscations over time. We will also monitor referrals on MyConcern (our safeguarding reporting software) which reference phone related incidents.</p>
<p><b>In the event of a wider emergency (e.g., lockdown, fire, or other serious incidents), how will the school communicate with parents to confirm student safety?</b></p>	<p>In the event of a serious incident parents will be made aware via Bromcom. Guidance from agencies including the police say that in such a scenario it is important that all messages are factual and accurate and come from a central source.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Education Endowment Foundation, *Cognitive Science Approaches in the Classroom: A Review of the Evidence*, pp.13, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Kings College London, *Teens with problematic smartphone use are twice as likely to have anxiety*.

<sup>3</sup> Schools Week, *School smartphone bans reduce overall screen time, poll suggests*.