

Houlton School
Signal Drive, Houlton,
Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 1ED

01788 593300
hello@houlton.tlet.org.uk
houltonschool.org.uk

Paul Brockwell
Executive Principal

Registered in England
Company number 07515832

Lorna Pountney
Head of School

18th June 2026

Dear Parents / Carers,

Re: Changes to the management of mobile phones at Houlton School.

In line with guidance from the Department for Education and taking into consideration the upcoming legislation around social media access for pupils under the age of 16, we will be making changes to the way in which we ensure a phone-free school environment.

Why make a change?

A recent survey of over 900 schools measured the effects of creating phone-free educational environments. These schools achieved notable progress in multiple areas:

- **65% of schools saw an improvement in academic performance.**
- **74% of schools saw an improvement in student behaviour.**
- **83% of schools saw an improvement in student engagement in the classroom.**
- **86% of schools saw a positive impact on student safety and wellness.**

With such startling results, it is vital that we work together to make school a safe, focused learning space for all our pupils, so that they fulfil their maximum potential and thrive at Houlton School. With this goal in mind, we will be transitioning away from phone submission to tutors at the start of each day, to a secure lockable phone pouch system.

These systems have been implemented in thousands of schools across 35 countries to facilitate an engaged and safer learning environment. Local schools have successfully implemented the same systems and we are confident the secure lockable phone pouches will have a positive impact here as well.

We believe that phones have great utility and can be a resource of value when used appropriately with adult oversight. We have also found that learning, safeguarding and social behaviour improve drastically when students are fully engaged with their teachers and classmates.

How will the new system work?

The program utilises a simple pouch that stores a phone and blocks any incoming external signals whilst the phone is secured within it. Each school day, pupils will:

- Enter the school site and place their phone inside their pouch and secure it.
- In the presence of their period 1 teacher, checks will be made to ensure the pouch is secure.

- Pupils will keep the locked pouch with them throughout the school day.
- Unlock the pouch, using a wall-mounted magnet at the end of the school day, on their way out of the school gates.

Pupils are required to bring their phone pouch to and from school each day and are responsible for their pouch at all times. This approach ensures a consistent, fair and distraction-free learning environment for all.

This is a significant change and one which I know all parents and carers will support us with. If your child refuses to follow school policy or is seen to be deliberately damaging their pouch, sanctions will be applied and a replacement pouch will be expected to be purchased by parents at a charge of £12.00. If pupils claim to not have their phone, they will place their bag on the table to be checked and be asked to turn out their pockets to search for their phone. If no phone is located, the pupil will then continue with their day. At key points throughout the day, there will be spot-checks, with the metal detecting wand, of pupils who claim to not have their phone with them.

Mobile Phone Misuse and Sanctions

We maintain a strict policy regarding the use of mobile phones to ensure a focused and safe learning environment. Please note the following protocols regarding non-compliance:

- **Confiscation and Storage:** If a student is found in possession of an unpermitted mobile phone during the school day, the device will be immediately confiscated. It will be stored securely in our main reception area.
- **24-Hour Retention:** All confiscated phones will be held for a mandatory 24-hour period.
- **Parental Notification and Collection:** Parents will be notified immediately of the confiscation so that alternative arrangements can be made if the child relies on their phone for safe travel to and from school. The phone will only be returned directly to a parent or guardian once the 24-hour period has elapsed.
- **Failure to Comply:** Any pupil who fails to comply with the daily practice of placing their mobile phone into the designated pouch will be placed immediately into our Internal Suspension (I.S.) room.
- **Bypassing the System:** We operate a zero-tolerance policy for evasion. Any pupil attempting to bypass the system—such as by handing in a dummy phone, using a second phone, or utilising a smartwatch to communicate—will face the same sanction and be placed in Internal Suspension.

What are the next steps?

In the coming weeks before the end of term, the new phone systems and more detailed mobile phone policy will be shared with parents, staff and pupils.

We will then contact you through ParentPay to provide the ordering and payment details for the phone pouches. Bought independently, the pouches themselves can be costly; as a School, we have pre-purchased enough pouches to have one per pupil. This will enable us to sell these pouches to you, as part of your child's compulsory school equipment, for a significantly lower price. Most schools charge somewhere in the region of £15 per pouch, by working with our sister-School, Ashlawn, we have managed to place a bigger order and reduce the cost down to £10 for Houlton families.

Once you have made payment through ParentPay, we will then arrange for pupils to collect their pouches, allowing us to have a final week this term, trialling the new process. This means that by

the new term in September, pupils and staff know what they are doing and can feel prepared coming into a new academic year.

Where can I go for further information?

If you have any questions, please feel free to check the FAQ section at the end of this letter.

If you cannot find your answer here, please email the main hello@houlton.tlet.org.uk and a member of our team will be happy to respond.

As always, if there is an emergency and you would like to get in contact with your child, please contact reception on [01788 593300](tel:01788593300)

More information around the Department for Education guidance on mobile phones can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools>

If you would like to learn more about the Government's new legislation around the use of Social Media for under-16s, please click on the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fact-sheet-new-rules-to-protect-children-online/fact-sheet-new-rules-to-protect-children-online>

In an effort to best serve your child, we appreciate your full support in adoption of the Secure Lockable Phone Pouch Program at our school.

Yours sincerely



Mr Paul Brockwell
Executive Principal

Yours sincerely



Mrs Lorna Pountney
Head of School

Secure Lockable Phone Pouch FAQ's

When will my child's pouch be unlocked?

Pouches will be unlocked when students leave at the end of the day. It is an incredibly quick process so learning time will not be lost. Students should unlock their pouch at a fixed unlocking location and then continue moving before taking their phone out of the pouch. Some end of day supervisors also have handheld detachers to assist.

What if my child forgets to unlock their pouch?

The reception will have an unlocking device should students forget to unlock their phone at the end of the day.

What happens if a child forgets the pouch and leaves it at home? Can you provide formal guidance/policy as to why a child should become responsible for these pouches?

If a child forgets their pouch they will be expected to hand their phone into reception for safe keeping.

Have the bus companies been warned that the children may be delayed in coming out of school in the first week or two as the scheme beds in? They need to be aware of possible delays.

We will be making the bus companies aware; however, the pouch system and unlocking will not cause delays to the children exiting school.

Will the unlocking device be with teachers or outside?

Some will be wall-mounted and affixed externally, others will be with key staff around school.

How do you know this is going to make a difference here other than this worked somewhere else? Why are the current rules and policies not being enforced better?

We have introduced mobile phone free schools previously and have seen the significant impact on behaviour and progress of this approach. Much has been in the press about smartphones and the impact on young people. We want to keep our young people safe, happy and free from pressures whilst in school.

In total agreement with the pouches, my only concern is that in D&T and Art students use their phone for research, taking pictures of final pieces for printing for GCSE's.

Learning will not be impacted by the introduction of this policy. Laptops and PCs are readily available in school.

What will be the outcome if children breach policy? E.g. They have a decoy phone in their pouch. What is the policy on smart watches?

Where we suspect a child has not placed the correct phone in the pouch the student will be spoken to and if found to be in a possession of a second phone, ear pods or smart watches will be placed initially into internal suspension and for persistent breaches of school policy, increased sanctions will be applied

Does this only apply to smart phones?

The policy applies to all mobile devices.