

20 May 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

Following extensive consultation with the secondary schools across Harpenden, alongside feedback from our own parent community, we will be introducing huSH phone pouches for all students in Years 7 - 11 from September 2026.

As you are aware, we already operate a robust “off and away” policy and mobile phones are not permitted to be used during the school day. However, despite these clear expectations, we continue to see the increasing impact mobile phones and social media are having on students’ concentration, wellbeing, social interaction and behaviour. In our recent survey, 90.2% of you recognised that having access to smart phones in school can be harmful. As we know that 92.7% of our student body have a smart phone device already, we have carefully considered a range of approaches used both locally and nationally and we are confident that the introduction of huSH pouches is the appropriate next step for our school community.

This decision has been made thoughtfully and with the best interests of our students at its heart. Across the UK and internationally, many schools have successfully introduced phone-free systems using secure locking pouches; reporting calmer school environments, improved focus in lessons, stronger peer interaction and fewer incidents linked to social media and phone misuse during the school day.

Importantly, our recent parent survey showed overwhelming support for a system that allows students to continue carrying phones for safety and communication on their journey to and from school, whilst strengthening restrictions during the school day itself. The huSH pouch system enables us to achieve both aims. Students will still bring their phones to school and keep them in their possession throughout the day, but devices will remain securely locked away and inaccessible until the end of the school day.

How the system will work:

- Every student in Years 7 - 11 will be issued with a huSH pouch free of charge by the school.
- Students will place their phone into the pouch during morning registration each day.
- The pouch will automatically lock securely once closed and remain locked throughout the school day.
- Students will keep the pouch with them at all times.
- Pouches will be unlocked at the end of the school day. There will be various unlocking stations for students to access before they leave the site.
- All mobile phones must be placed into the pouch, including smartphones and non-smartphones alike.
- The pouch remains the property of the school and must be returned at the end of Year 11.

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We will spend time during registration and in assemblies at the end of this term explaining the system, expectations and routines to students. These expectations will then be reinforced again at the beginning of the new academic year.

Students in the Sixth Form will not use huSH pouches however mobile phone use will only be permitted within designated Sixth Form areas.

To ensure the system is effective, expectations will be applied consistently and clearly from September 2026:

- Any use of a mobile phone during the school day, or a phone being seen outside of a locked pouch, will result in the student receiving a C3F detention (1.5 hours on a Friday) and confiscation of the phone until the end of the school day.
- If this occurs more than once, the phone will only be returned to a parent or carer, who will be required to collect it from school personally.

We appreciate that this represents a significant change for students and families. However, we are confident that this approach will have a positive impact on students' learning, wellbeing, engagement and relationships with one another, while helping us create the calm and focused environment all young people deserve.

Thank you for your continued support. I have attached some FAQs about the huSH pouches to address any additional questions you may have.

Yours sincerely



Katie Barter
Headteacher

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we introducing huSH pouches?

We want students to be fully present in lessons, at social times and during enrichment activities without the constant distraction of mobile phones. Schools using similar systems have reported improved focus, calmer environments and stronger face-to-face interaction between students.

Will students still bring phones to school?

Yes. Students may still bring phones for safety and communication before and after school. The phones will simply not be accessible during the school day.

Do students keep possession of their phones?

Yes. Students keep the pouch with them at all times. The phone is not handed in to staff.

Will the pouch damage the phone?

No. The pouches are specifically designed for this purpose and do not damage devices.

What happens in an emergency?

If a parent needs to contact a student urgently during the school day, they should contact the school reception in the normal way. Likewise, students will always be able to access support through staff if needed. Should they need to speak to parents during the school day this will be facilitated by pastoral or administrative staff.

What if a student forgets their pouch?

Temporary procedures will be in place for students who forget their pouch. The phone will be handed in and locked in a phone locker within the Pastoral office during school hours. Students can collect their phone from the Pastoral office at the end of the school day. Repeated failures to bring the pouch may result in sanctions.

Do smart watches or earbuds need to be put in the pouch?

All phones must be secured in the pouch. The pouch is a Faraday cage and, once the phone is inside, other devices will not be able to connect to the phone. Smart watches are not permitted in school.

Can students access phones during the day?

No. Phones should remain secured for the duration of the school day. If a student is leaving site during school hours for a meeting or appointment, the pouch will be unlocked as the student leaves site.

When will the system begin?

The new system will begin in September 2026. Further details regarding distribution and routines will be shared before implementation.

What happens if my child needs their mobile device to be able to communicate with their insulin pump or other medical devices?

There is a specific huSH pouch for those with medical conditions (e.g. diabetes) to allow them emergency access to their phone. This pouch is also not a Faraday cage so it will not block the signal to the pump or device. The student will use this

alternative pouch to ensure they are able to access their phone for their medical safety.

Where should students store their phones during school hours?

Once the phone is secured in the pouch it should be secured safely within a student's bag or locker. The phone will remain the responsibility of the student and, as is currently the case, the school accepts no liability for any damage to or loss of a device brought to school.

What happens if my child's pouch is lost or damaged?

The school will provide one pouch for each student which will remain school property. If the pouch is lost or damaged it will need to be replaced at a cost of £12 per pouch. When your child leaves Roundwood Park School, aside from reasonable wear and tear, the pouch should be returned in full working condition. Failure to do so will result in the pouch needing to be replaced by parents/carers.

Can my child use a smart watch in school?

Smart watches are not permitted in school. Although they will not be able to communicate with the phone while it is in the pouch, they still provide a distraction from learning. Analogue watches may be worn.

What if my child arrives late to school or needs to leave early?

There will be stations to unlock phones from pouches in main reception and the pastoral office. Students leaving early should ensure they visit these locations to sign out and gain access to their phone once given permission to do so by staff. Students are able to lock their own pouch if they arrive to school late and should do so at the point of signing in. The responsibility for locking the pouch will be on the student. Failure to do so will result in a sanction being applied.

How quick is the unlocking process?

It takes less than a second per pouch to unlock and there will be several unlocking stations around the school site to enable all students easy access as they leave school at the end of the school day. These unlocking stations will not be accessible during school hours.

What are the arrangements for offsite sporting fixtures?

Students should keep their phones within their pouches and PE staff will carry a portable unlocking device to allow students access to devices as needed.

What happens if a student forgets to unlock their pouch at the end of the school day?

The student will be able to either return to school where an unlocking station will be available or they can choose to enjoy a phone-free evening until the next school day.

What are the school rules about pouches?

As a phone is now a prohibited item, if a phone is suspected of being used and not placed within a pouch a student may be searched. The following sanctions will apply:

Offence	Sanction
First offence - Phone used or seen out of a pouch	Phone confiscated for the school day. C3F Friday detention.
Second offence - Phone used or seen out of a pouch	Phone confiscated and C3S Saturday Detention issued. Phone will need to be collected from school by the parent/carer. A meeting will be held with parents/carers to ensure the behaviour is addressed and a plan put in place.
Third offence - Phone used or seen out of a pouch	Phone will need to be handed in each day to the pastoral office for one term. The student has lost the right to keep the phone on their person.
Student refusing to hand in a phone	C4 Internal Suspension.
Student refusing to be searched when a phone is suspected to be on their person and not in a pouch	C4 Internal Suspension.

Are the school allowed to confiscate and keep mobile phones?

Yes. From September, mobile phones will be classified as a prohibited item in our school behaviour policy.

The Department for Education (DfE) Mobile Phones in Schools Guidance (February 2026) states that “schools have the power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty.” The law protects staff from liability for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, provided they act lawfully.

The DfE guidance can be found [HERE](#).

Headteachers are supported by the DfE to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices for a period they deem proportionate. Additionally, Headteachers or staff they authorise have a statutory power to search a student or their possessions if there are reasonable grounds to suspect the student is in possession of a prohibited item (including mobile phones).