



1st July 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

In May 2026 you all received a letter from Mr Williams (MNSP CEO) that included information about changes that the Trust is making to its mobile phone policy. With the new legislation stating that *'Students must not have access to their mobile phones (or similar devices like smartwatches) throughout the school day, including during lessons, break times, and lunchtime'* it will no longer be sufficient for schools to say they expect children to have their phones switched off and in their bags.

We are aware that this is a big change for our students. There are strong reasons for these changes that are not only grounded in research but also in the experiences of young people across the country. It is clear that access to mobile phones 24/7 is fuelling anxiety, sleep deprivation, and the "Fear of Missing Out". In creating a phone-free space, we break the cycle of notification anxiety and give students a much-needed mental break. Moreover, smartphones are engineered to fracture attention. Even a vibrating phone in a pocket shifts focus, attention and mental energy. Removing this distraction reclaims valuable instruction time and boosts student focus and academic performance. It is also worth noting that all schools across the country will be expected to enforce this, and the new legislation around access to social media will further reduce the necessity for students to use their phones during the day.

Before deciding to use pouches, the school explored a number of options. Other solutions such as depositing phones in lockers or secure boxes, are cumbersome, take up time and require huge logistical adjustments to the timing of the day. In addition, students have indicated that whilst they understand the new legislation, they would feel more comfortable and secure having the phone in their possession rather than being handed over.

For these reasons, to ensure adherence to DfE policy whilst allowing students to maintain personal responsibility for their devices, we will be introducing pouches. This approach aligns with other schools within the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership (MNSP) and is the best way forwards for our school context too.

From September 2026 onwards, these pouches will become part of essential equipment for students. Pouches are magnetically sealed, restricting access to devices throughout the day. Pouches will be available to buy from the school. Students will be asked to place specific items in their pouches and store these safely in their bags. At the end of the day, students will open their pouches whilst exiting the site.



To support this transition, working alongside MNSP, we have procured pouches for students from an experienced supplier, Yondr. Yondr has worked with schools to successfully implement pouches across the country. Over the past six weeks the school has been working with consultants to establish a sensible implementation plan which can be seen below.

We understand that the costs of uniform and equipment can be significant for many families, which will be further impacted by the expectation to purchase a pouch at full cost (likely to be around £17.00 - £18.00). For this reason the school is fully funding the cost of your child's pouch for this year only. Pupils will keep their devices with them in their locked pouch throughout the school day. Pouches will be regarded as essential equipment and students must bring these items with them every day. The pouches are incredibly durable and should last for five years if treated with care. If pouches are lost, damaged or broken, they will require replacement and will be sold at full cost. Please be advised that parents and families will be expected to cover the full cost of a replacement for a damaged, broken or lost pouch.

Alternative pouches will be available for exceptional circumstances, such as pupils who need phones for measuring blood sugar levels or for other medical monitoring requirements. In these cases, students will be provided with pouches that close with velcro. Please be aware that these will be for students who already have a record of serious medical conditions that would require an alternative pouch. Not all medical conditions require an alternative pouch and these will only be provided in exceptional circumstances.

Our protocol for managing the use of the mobile phone pouches can be found below:

Devices that will be required to be placed into phone pouches

- Mobile phones
- Smart watches
- Earpods or similar wireless headphones

On entry to school:

- Our site will be a mobile and device free zone from the moment students cross the school gates or the front entrance.
- Students ensure pouches are locked before entry to school. Phones should be turned off to conserve battery life.
- Students who arrive on school premises before the morning bell are not allowed to use their phone before the start of school. Any phone or device seen being used before 08:40 will be confiscated and returned only to the parent/carer. Students must get in the habit of placing the above items in locked pouches before entering the site each day.



8:45- Tutor time

- Students will present their equipment and pouch for tutors to check as part of our usual routine alongside uniform and equipment.
- Students will demonstrate the pouch is secure using the 'lock and drop' checking procedure. This will be demonstrated to the students at the start of the year.
- If the student does not have a pouch, their phone will be held in the uniform hub for the day - no exceptions.
- If a student is late during tutor time, they go to registration and this process is checked by the tutor.
- If a student arrives after registration, the 'lock & drop' procedure is completed at reception as they sign in and check on arrival to class.
- If students are found using a device during the day, it will be confiscated and only returned to the parent/carer. Parents will be asked to come and collect the phone from reception at the end of the school day.
- Refusal to hand the phone over results in internal suspension and parent/carers coming to collect the device.
- Concerns that a student has a device on them results in a call out for SLT to investigate and where necessary, contacting the family to support locating the device.

15:15 - Exit from school

- Site staff open the unlock boxes at 15:15.
- Students are responsible for opening their pouches as they exit the site. There will be several unlocking points positioned on the pathways at the front of the school site.
- Pouches should be locked once the phone is removed to protect the lock pin.
- Students who attend clubs and activities, will be asked to unlock their phones upon exiting the site. The rule remains in place whilst students are on site at all times.

Other information - replacement pouches

- If parents do not pay for a replacement pouch, devices will have to be handed in at the start of every day at the uniform hub.
- Devices will have to be handed in each morning while any payment is outstanding.

Emergency Communication

Students will keep their pouches with them at all times for before and after-school use. In the event of an emergency during the day, parents should contact the main office to reach their child. We will be talking to young carers over the next few weeks and working with families to ensure that a suitable arrangement for contact is in place to support you both whilst ensuring the policy is adhered to.

To support emergency contact, we will be reissuing our data collection form. Please complete this and return before the start of September if your contact details need to be updated on our system.

We are also aware that there is a very small minority of students who do not possess a phone and may not require a pouch. If this applies to your child, we ask that you write



and inform us of this formally. You will then be provided with an online form to complete. Please be advised that if your child gets a phone at a later point, they will be required to get a pouch and parents will be liable for the full cost.

How can parents support their child?

Please talk to your child about the positive benefits and remind them that this is a new UK law for all students in all schools.

Please check payments in your Arbor account regularly to ensure there are sufficient funds for your child to buy food from the canteen. A weekly routine would be a useful method of ensuring the account stays topped up.

Check that your child has all the correct equipment at the start of the day.

Communicate with the school in advance regarding last minute medical appointments so that we can support you to collect your child in a timely manner.

Ensure that your emergency contact details are up to date.

Make sure your child packs their pouch and takes care of it at home.

Build it into the back to school routine, where students have periods without accessing their phones in the day, so the gap when they return does not feel so significant.

Implementation of Pouches

Over the final two weeks for the year, we will be holding information sessions with students about the implementation. This will give students an opportunity to see the pouches and how they are locked and unlocked. Students will be able to ask questions and provide suggestions to support with the smooth introduction.

At the start of the new term alongside our planned launched pad days, students will receive their pouches, be given an opportunity to lock and unlock pouches and be briefed on the 'lock and drop' checking procedure.

The school will be reviewing its records of students with underlying medical conditions that may require an alternative pouch. We will contact these families individually to discuss medical needs and establish whether an alternative pouch is necessary. To reiterate, these will only be supplied in exceptional circumstances.



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We would like to thank you so much for your support in this matter. As we work through this new system, there may be minor changes made to the procedures we use, but if this is the case then we will communicate those changes to you in good time.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Balkwill
Headteacher

