



Wednesday 11th March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing a focused learning environment and promoting the wellbeing of all students, we are introducing a new mobile phone policy supported by the Department for Education (DfE) guidance framework. From 16th June, Cansfield will become a phone-free school.

Why This Change?

In February 2026, the DfE updated its guidance on mobile phones in schools, stating that schools should prohibit mobile phone use throughout the entire school day, including lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes and transitions. This update will also be incorporated into the 2026 version of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

The DfE emphasises that schools must clearly communicate their expectations so that families understand both the rationale and benefits of a phone-free culture.

National survey data from over 900 phone-free schools shows strong outcomes:

- 65% reported improved academic performance
- 74% reported improved student behaviour
- 83% saw increased classroom engagement
- 86% noted improvements in safety and wellbeing

To ensure Cansfield becomes fully phone-free, we are consulting with all stakeholders regarding the introduction of lockable phone pouches.

Purpose of the New Phone Pouch System

Our aims are to:

- Increase focus and engagement during learning
- Reduce distractions across the school day
- Support positive social interaction and wellbeing
- Align with national guidance promoting safe, calm and focused school environments

Our decision follows careful research, consultation and visits to schools—both local and national—already using this system. While we recognise the important role of technology in young people's lives, constant access to social media and messaging can negatively impact concentration, wellbeing and mental health.

Headteacher: [Mrs N Daniels](#)
Cansfield, Old Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan. WN4 9TP

Lockable pouches allow students to retain possession of their phones while ensuring they do not have access to them during the school day, significantly reducing both disruption and temptation.

How the System Works

- Each student will be issued their own secure, lockable pouch, which must be brought to school daily.
- On arrival, students must place their phone inside the pouch.
- Students must not enter school with an unlocked pouch or with a phone visible, as this will breach the Behaviour Policy.
- Pouches lock using a magnetic locking mechanism.
- Students keep their locked pouch with them throughout the day.
- At the end of the day, students unlock their pouches at designated stations as they leave the building ready for their journey home.

Emergency Contact and Medical Needs

We understand that families may have concerns about communication. Student safety remains our priority.

- Students who need to contact home can use school phones via Pastoral, SEND, Attendance or Student Services teams – this area will be manned at all times.
- Parents and carers can contact the school office at any time, and we will ensure messages are passed on promptly.
- Students with medical needs requiring access to a phone (e.g., diabetes management) will receive a modified pouch that meets their requirements.
- Vulnerable students who may find this transition challenging will receive support by nominated members of staff to manage this change ahead of 16th June.

Your Support Matters

We recognise that this may be a significant change for many families, and your support is essential. Evidence shows that limiting mobile phone use in schools creates calmer, safer learning environments where students can thrive. We will continue to monitor, evaluate and refine the policy in partnership with students, parents and staff.

Next Steps

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the introduction of phone pouches, please send them to phonefree@cansfield.wigan.sch.uk by 2nd April.

Further communication will follow, including:

- Detailed information about the launch
- Clear expectations and sanctions relating to non-compliance, damage or loss
- A comprehensive FAQ section
- Links to relevant school policies and any updates

You are warmly invited to a Parent Engagement Evening on 28th April focused on phone use, online safety and mental health. Part of the session will be led by Olly Welsby (Brightcore), a national mental health and safeguarding consultant. There will be an opportunity for questions following the presentation.

Further communications will include:

- Confirmation of launch readiness
- Reminders, updates and key notices

Consultation with Students

Students will also play an important role in this process. Assemblies will be delivered to all year groups from the week commencing 23rd March.

A group of students will visit local schools already using pouches to learn from peers; they will then present their findings during assemblies.

Students will also have an opportunity to share their views and questions during form time.

Thank you, as always, for your continued partnership in supporting the success and wellbeing of our students.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "NDaniels".

Mrs N. Daniels
Headteacher