

1st May 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you to all parents and carers who have taken the time to contact the school, submit questions, and attend our Parents' Engagement Evening. We value this greatly and appreciate the thoughtful comments and points that have been raised.

Following the consultation on our proposed phone-free approach, we have carefully considered the key themes and questions emerging from this feedback. Please find attached a set of Frequently Asked Questions, which are intended to provide clarity, consistency, and reassurance by addressing the most common queries.

I am very aware that this represents a significant amount of information. As we approach key implementation points, I will send shorter, timely reminders to help keep families informed and supported.

If you have any further questions after reviewing the FAQs, please email our dedicated inbox at **phonefree@cansfield.wigan.sch.uk**. This will ensure that queries are captured centrally and responded to accurately.

If I feel there are any emails already received here that haven't been answered through the FAQ, I will respond to these individually.

Thank you once again for your engagement, feedback, and partnership. Working together is key to ensuring any changes are implemented thoughtfully and in the best interests of our students.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs N Daniels
Headteacher

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

Phone-Free School: Implementation of Lockable Pouches

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Parents and Carers

- **Why is the school making this change?**

The decision to introduce phone-free pouches has been taken following careful consideration of:

- Government requirements
- Feedback from parents, students, staff and governors
- Operational and safeguarding requirements
- Department for Education (DfE) guidance
- Wigan Local Authority expectations
- National concerns regarding young people and phone usage

Our priority is always to ensure that school arrangements support students' wellbeing, learning, and safety, while allowing the school to operate in a calm, consistent, and fair way for all.

- **Why is the school implementing phone-free pouches?**

The school is implementing phone-free pouches to support learning, focus, behaviour, safeguarding, and wellbeing, and to align fully with national guidance.

The DfE's updated guidance *Mobile phones in schools* (February 2026) states that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default, with exceptions only where necessary. The guidance highlights the significant negative impact that phones can have on attention, behaviour, safeguarding, and mental wellbeing, and makes clear that schools should take a robust and consistent approach throughout the entire school day, including social times.

This position has been further reinforced by the government's intention to place this guidance on a statutory footing through forthcoming legislation. In addition, Ofsted has confirmed that from April 2026 inspectors will routinely evaluate how effectively schools implement and enforce mobile phone policies, including their impact on learning, behaviour and wellbeing.

Introducing phone-free pouches allows the school to:

- Meet national expectations
- Create a calm, focused learning environment
- Reduce distractions and social pressures
- Strengthen safeguarding arrangements
- Ensure fairness and consistency for all students

The pouch system provides a balanced solution: students may bring phones to school for travel or after-school arrangements, but do not have access to them during the school day.

- **How will this affect my child day to day?**

We do not anticipate any negative impact on students' learning or wellbeing. Staff will continue to support students as normal through pastoral teams, Heads of Year, Student Services, Inclusion staff and safeguarding leads.

Any individual concerns about a child can always be raised directly with the school so that appropriate support can be put in place.

- **What will entry to school look like each morning?**

On arrival, students will be directed to a member of staff. The process will be:

- Students turn off their mobile phone and show this to staff
- Phones (and any earbuds) are placed into the pouch
- Students demonstrate the pouch is securely locked
- The locked pouch is returned to the student's bag for the day

To ensure fairness and consistency, staff will carry out spot checks:

- At entry points in the morning
- At various points during the school day

These checks may include the use of a wand to quality assure procedures are being followed consistently.

Pouches are designed to be stored safely in students' bags and should not be visible throughout the school day (unless this needs to be kept elsewhere for a medical need.) If students do not bring a bag, they will be issued with a drawstring bag for the day so all equipment can be stored safely and students are prepared for the day.

- **What will exit from school look like?**

At the end of the day, students will exit the school gates as normal. Unlocking stations will be positioned on gates across the site so that pouches can be unlocked as students leave.

Stations will be spread out to ensure a smooth, safe and orderly dismissal without overcrowding.

- **What happens if a student forgets their phone pouch?**

If a student forgets their pouch, they will be asked to hand their phone to a member of staff on arrival.

- The phone will be placed in an alternative clear pouch
- It will be locked away safely for the day in lockable phone storage
- The phone will be returned to the student at the end of the day via a supervised exit point
- No temporary phone pouch will be issued

This ensures consistency, safeguarding, and the calm running of the school day.

- **What happens if a student does not bring a phone to school?**

It is absolutely fine if a student chooses not to bring a mobile phone to school.

Students will still be checked on entry in line with the policy.

What happens if a student breaches this policy?

Any use of a mobile phone during the school day, or any attempt to tamper with a pouch, is taken very seriously.

This behaviour directly breaches the school's no-phones policy and will be dealt with in line with the school's behaviour and mobile phone policies:

- The student will be removed from lessons
- They will be placed in Internal Suspension for the remainder of the day
- Parents or carers will be informed
- Phones must be collected from school by an adult as per current policy

Repeated or persistent breaches may result in further sanctions, including periods of Internal Suspension delivered in partnership with other schools, in line with local arrangements, and parent / carer meetings.

- **What happens if a student needs to contact home during the school day?**

If a student needs to contact home, this will be done through Student Services, which will be staffed throughout the school day.

Support is also available via the Inclusion Team where appropriate. These arrangements ensure students can contact home when necessary while maintaining the no-phones policy.

- **What if a parent or carer needs to contact a student during the day?**

Parents and carers should continue to contact the school via reception for any urgent messages that need to be passed on.

Reception staff will ensure messages are passed on appropriately and that students are contacted in a safe and supervised manner.

- **What happens in an emergency, such as a lockdown?**

In the event of an emergency, including a lockdown, students would not be permitted to use mobile phones. Staff are fully trained to manage emergency situations and all communication.

Any information shared with parents or carers would be issued centrally by the school to ensure it is accurate, timely, and prioritises student safety, without overloading communication systems. Centralised communication helps prevent misinformation, reduces unnecessary anxiety, and allows the school to maintain clear oversight of all students at all times.

- **What if my child has medical needs requiring phone access?**

Where a student has medical needs that require access to a phone during the day, reasonable adjustments will be made.

Eligible students will be issued with a medical pouch, allowing access in line with individual needs. Arrangements will be agreed in advance with parents or carers and, where appropriate, supported by medical evidence.

Should you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school to arrange a meeting to discuss these further.

- **What if my child is vulnerable?**

Some students may require additional support. Staff will work proactively with vulnerable students to support them through the rollout and beyond.

Support may include:

- Additional supervision
- Alternative social-time arrangements
- Access to specific staff or facilities

All arrangements will be agreed on an individual basis in partnership with students, parents/carers, and pastoral or inclusion staff.

If you have further concerns regarding this, please contact school to organise a meeting to discuss further.

- **Can students use phones during after-school clubs or revision sessions?**

No. Phones will remain locked in pouches for the duration of any school-run activity, including after-school clubs, weekend sessions, and revision activities.

Students will unlock their phones as they leave the school site, as at the end of a normal school day.

- **Can students use phones on school trips?**

Phone use on school trips will be managed on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature and supervision of the trip.

Where appropriate, staff may carry portable unlocking devices. Communication sent to parents in advance will make expectations clear.

- **What happens if a pouch is lost or damaged?**

Students are expected to take responsibility for their phone pouch. It will be their phone for the duration of their time at Cansfield.

If a pouch is lost or damaged, a replacement fee will be charged, consistent with expectations for other school equipment.

- **What happens if a student arrives late or leaves early?**

If a student arrives late or has to leave early, they will follow the same process as normal entry in Student Services where there will be a portable unlocker.

- **Rollout of Phone Pouches**

All students will be issued with a phone pouch, including a laminated name card.

To support a smooth introduction, students will complete a guided walkthrough of the process.

Walkthrough dates:

- Year 10 – 15 June
- Year 9 – 16 June
- Year 8 – 17 June
- Year 7 – 19 June

Launch dates:

- Year 10 – 16 June
- Year 9 – 17 June
- Year 8 – 18 June
- Year 7 – 22 June

In order to ensure the smooth exit from school in the first week of this, we will be operating a staggered exit system for one week only: 22nd – 26th June. The exit times will work as following:

- Year 7 – 3.00
- Year 8 – 3.05
- Year 9 – 3.10
- Year 10 – 3.15

- **Will there be delays to the start or end of the day?**

During the initial roll-out, the process may take slightly longer as pupils adjust to the new system.

To minimise any disruption, we will have additional staff supporting entry and exit points. In addition, a staggered exit will operate during the week of **22nd–26th June** (see above for timings). We expect that, as students become familiar with the procedures, entry and exit will run smoothly and become routine.

- **What consultation has taken place?**

The school has followed a thorough and phased consultation process, including:

- Discussion and challenge through Governors
- Consultation and discussion with staff
- Working with other schools and Headteachers regarding their phone policies
- Communication from parents via a dedicated inbox
- Student leadership visits to a school with pouches in place
- Whole-school assemblies
- Form-time discussions led by the student panel
- Further assemblies focused on FAQs and rollout
- An invitation to a parent engagement evening led by a national consultant

This reflects our commitment to transparency and careful implementation.

- **Will this be reviewed?**

Yes. As with all school policies, arrangements will be reviewed regularly. Feedback from students, parents/carers, staff and governors will inform any refinements needed.

We understand that changes can raise questions, and we thank parents and carers for engaging constructively. Our shared aim is to maintain a calm, safe and supportive environment for all students, and we appreciate your continued cooperation and support.

Updated policies will take effect from Tuesday 16th June and will be on our website.