

Friday 22nd May 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

Phone-Free School

Last month I wrote to you to explain that Great Sankey High School will become a phone-free space in June to help improve teaching and learning and enhance safeguarding. Thank you to the parents and carers who sent us questions about this. We had 9 responses and while some of the queries were addressed in the FAQs that were attached in that letter, we have added a few more to answer your questions in the attached FAQ document.

Here is a reminder of how it will work.

- Students will be given a phone pouch in June. We intend to launch the system on Monday, June 8th.
- Each morning in registration, students will lock their phone inside the phone pouch under the supervision of their Form Tutor.
- Students will keep the locked pouch with them throughout the school day.
- At the end of the day, the pouch will be unlocked by students using one of several unlocking stations that will be located around the school site or by a teacher on duty with a handheld unlocking device.
- Students will take their phone pouch home, and they will be responsible for bringing them in each day.

The original and additional FAQs are attached to this letter. I have also attached our new 'Phone Free School Guidelines' document that has lots of details about the systems and more information about various scenarios that may happen.

During the week commencing Monday 1st June, there will be student assemblies explaining the phone pouch system to all students. On Monday 8th June, all students will be provided with a copy of their timetable to refer to if necessary.

Thank you for the positive feedback so far. I look forward to and appreciate your full and ongoing support in adoption of the phone pouches at our school.

Best wishes



Mr G Evans
Headteacher

Frequently Asked Questions

Will this affect all students?

In June, we will give all students in Years 7, 8, 9 & 10 a phone pouch. In September, the new Year 7 will also be given a phone pouch.

What if I want to reach my child during the school day?

We want our students to be engaged in their learning. If you need to contact your child during the school day, contact the main office on 01925 724118. We will then be able to make any necessary arrangements.

What if there is a school emergency?

In case of a school emergency, we direct our students to safety first, following our school emergency protocols. As always, we will communicate with parents/carers through the usual communication channels.

Will my student's phone be safe?

Students will continue to be in possession of their own phone - in their phone pouch - for the entire school day. We will advise students to store the pouch safely in their school bag or blazer pockets.

What if the phone pouch gets damaged or a student is caught on their phone?

If a student damages their pouch or is caught on their phone, we will confiscate the phone/pouch and call home. A sanction will be given to the student in line with the school's behaviour policies including the new 'phone free school' guidelines. These guidelines will be shared with parents, carers, and students before we launch the phone pouches.

Parents/Carers will have to buy a replacement phone pouch (The cost including delivery is £10.50) and we will provide a link to do this.

Note: Damage consists of any signs that the physical integrity of the pouch has been compromised, whether intentional or unintentional, as determined by school staff.

What if my child forgets their pouch?

If a child forgets their pouch but has their mobile phone, the Year Team will keep hold of the phone until the end of the day.

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

In other schools, this almost never happens. All students funnel past the unlocking stations at the exits; they want their phones back and don't forget to unlock their pouches. If they do arrive home with a phone still locked in a pouch, they can either come back to school to unlock it or have a phone free evening! There will be unlocking stations outside the school building on Barrow Hall Lane and in Reception.

How quick is the unlocking process?

The unlocking process is very quick and takes under a second per student. Staff on duty at the end of the day will be on hand with mobile unlocking devices to stop long queues forming. Duty staff will continue to have the handheld unlocking device in the long term.

Will this delay students getting to the school bus?

No. The unlocking process is swift and won't cause delays. Staff on duty at the bus will have a handheld unlocking device.

Why implement this now – can't current policies just be enforced?

The vast majority of students respect our current policy but there are still occasions when some are tempted to use their mobile phone. The pouch system ensures fair enforcement across the school and removes temptation entirely.

What if a child tries to cheat the system (e.g. uses a second phone or smartwatch)?

Students attempting to bypass the policy will receive a sanction. Repeated breaches will result in increased sanctions.

What if a student chooses not to bring their mobile phone to school?

All students will be issued with a phone pouch. In schools where the system is already in place, several students make this choice. If a student is subsequently seen using a mobile phone during the day, they will receive an appropriate sanction, and the device will be confiscated until the end of the day.

Will there be any exceptions? My child needs to check an app for health-related issues.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with exceptional circumstances linked to diagnosed medical needs (e.g. Diabetic students testing bloods). We already have a list of students and the relevant parents and carers will be contacted. These students must then adhere to the code of conduct/acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use.

Additional questions submitted by parents & carers**What is stopping students going to one of the unlocking stations during their break or lunch to unlock their phone?**

The unlocking stations that are inside the school site will be locked in a cabinet during the school day so this will not be possible.

What will happen if a student says they do not have their phone on them when they actually do?

The student's Form Tutor may ask them to show the contents of their bag or pockets to assess if they are telling the truth. If a student is seen with a phone during the school day, a sanction will be given to the student in line with the school's behaviour policies including the new 'phone free school' guidelines.

My child has a 5-minute pass to leave school early - will there be provisions for the phones to be unlocked for the children leaving before everyone else?

Yes. The cabinets that house an unlocking station that are located on site will be opened from 2.40pm each day. Anyone who leaves school at any time during the day will be able to use unlocking stations that will be 'off site' in the Barrow Hall Lane Car Park area and on the Omega building opposite Livewire.

My child attends after school clubs and fixtures – what should they do?

All students will be able to unlock their phone pouch at the end of the school day. If they forget to unlock the phone pouch on their way to an after-school club, they will still be able to unlock it afterwards. If a student forgets to unlock their phone pouch when they are at a fixture away from school, they will be able to use the unlocking stations off site near Livewire or on Barrow Hall Lane.

There is a lot of information on the student app in relation to timetable and homework - how are they going to get this?

The situation is no different now – students are not allowed to use their mobile phone during the school day. The introduction of phone pouches will ensure fair enforcement for all. Students already use their app on the way to school to check their timetable and homework. Students who lose the printed timetable that will be provided, will be able to get a new copy if they need one.

Can pupils still wear a smartwatch?

Yes. The phone pouches block the mobile network signal and Bluetooth so Smartwatches will be a watch to tell the time during the school day. However, please remember that Smartwatches are not permitted to be worn during assessments and examinations.

What will happen if a student has no money on their Wisepay account and they need to eat at lunchtime? Will this mean the student won't eat that day? Will the school be able to call parents/carers in a timely manner to allow top ups?

This does happen rarely but we will tell students regularly that they need to let us know as soon as they realise to enable us to contact home. We will rely on students informing us in a timely manner. If a student has no money on their account and only realises when they are in the Sankey Diner queue or at the till, we never let a student go without a meal. We will provide a meal and contact parents & carers.

How will the student communicate with parents/carers if they need to be picked up from school for personal or health reasons? Will there be a pay phone available in school for students to call home at break times if needed?

Students already know that if they feel ill or have a personal issue that they can go to their Year Office and the Year Team will decide if contact with home is required. This will still be the case. There will not be a pay phone in school.