

Thursday 30th April 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

Phone-Free School

In June 2026, Great Sankey High School will become a phone-free space to improve teaching and learning and enhance safeguarding. We will be making our school a phone-free environment by introducing secure lockable phone pouches. We have visited and spoken to colleagues in schools in Warrington & Halton who have already introduced phone pouches and they speak very positively about the impact this has had on their school community. We are confident that it will have a positive impact here as well.

The system we are introducing is in line with the latest Department for Education guidelines (February 2026) which stated that, "All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default." More recently, the Government has shared how it intends to ban the use of phones in schools. ([Phones to be banned in schools by law in England under government plans - BBC News](#))

We fully recognise that mobile phones have many useful features. However, we know that learning, engagement and social interactions improve significantly when students are fully focused on their lessons and peers.

How the system works:

- Students will be given a phone pouch in June. We will share the exact date as soon as we can.
- 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.

Over 900 schools were recently surveyed to measure the effects of creating phone-free educational environments. These schools achieved notable progress in multiple areas:

- **65% of schools saw an improvement in academic performance**
- **74% of schools saw an improvement in student behaviour**
- **83% of schools saw an improvement in student engagement in the classroom**
- **86% of schools saw a positive impact on student safety and wellness**

There is a set of FAQs attached to this letter. If you have any questions about anything that is not answered in this letter or FAQs, please do not hesitate to contact the school directly by completing this Microsoft form [Parent / Carer Questions](#) with your question/query. Please complete this by Friday 15th May at the latest. Following this, we will publish a further FAQ document based on the responses.

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

In an effort to best serve your child and the Great Sankey High School community, we look forward to and appreciate your full and ongoing support in adoption of the phone pouches at our school.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Evans', written in a cursive style.

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 at 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 are in possession of their 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 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. If needed, we will add extra unlocking points. 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 & carers will be contacted. These students must then adhere to the code of conduct/acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use.