



PHONE FREE SCHOOL GUIDELINES

Reviewer: Mrs Wardle

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**Approved by Local
Governing Board on
18th May 2026**

Signed:

(Mr G Evans, Headteacher)

Date:

18th May 2026

'PHONE FREE' SCHOOL GUIDELINES

SCHOOL VISION:

Our Vision - Achieving Greatness Together

Our Mission - Great Sankey is a safe, inclusive community providing an environment where excellent teaching and pastoral care empowers all students to be active learners, to celebrate diversity and to realise their potential.

OUR AIMS ARE:

- Great Sankey High School is a phone-free space to improve teaching and learning and enhance safeguarding.
- To provide students with a learning environment where they can thrive, free from the distractions of phones and social media.
- Drive improvement in student wellbeing, academic performance, classroom engagement, and social connection.
- To ensure a sympathetic, inclusive, social environment exists and individuals treat each other with mutual respect.
- To be consistent with other Trust and school policies such as:
 - Child Protection & Safeguarding policy
 - Behaviour policy
- To meet the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory [mobile phone guidance](#)

SCHOOL RULES:

In line with the DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance; "schools should develop a mobile phone policy that prohibits the use of mobile phones and other smart technology with similar functionality to mobile phones (for example the ability to send and/or receive notifications or messages via mobile phone networks or the ability to record audio and/or video) throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. At Great Sankey High School, **mobile phones and wearable technology are not to be used during school.**

To facilitate this:

- Every student is assigned a personal phone pouch.
- It is each student's responsibility to bring their phone pouch with them to school every day and keep it in good working condition.
- Phones must be placed in the pouch. Sanctions apply in the same way if these are seen during the school day.

GUIDELINES:

Beginning of the Day

Students must bring their phone pouch to school with them each day. Each morning in registration or assembly, students will:

- 1) Turn their phone off.
- 2) Open their phone pouch.
- 3) Place their phone inside the pouch and secure it in front of school staff.
- 4) Store it in their bag or blazer for the day.

End of the Day

Students will:

- 1) Open their pouch at an unlocking station or a handheld unlocking device used by duty staff.
- 2) Remove their phone
- 3) Keep in their school bag or blazer overnight ready to bring in to school the next day.

Late Starters or Early Leavers

Students arriving late will pouch their phones at Main Reception when they sign in or at the Late Gate. Students leaving early will be able to unlock their pouch at Main Reception or at an unlocking station outside the exits on Barrow Hall Lane.

VIOLATIONS

Forgotten Pouch

If a student forgets their pouch, **their phone will be collected and stored securely for the whole day. A phone call home will be made to remind parents/carers of the school policy.** The phone will be returned to the student at dismissal at the end of the school day from the Year Office. If a student consistently forgets their pouch, it will be considered lost. Please refer to the Lost Pouch section below.

No Phone

If a student does not bring a phone to school, their bag/blazer may be checked by the Form Tutor and they may be screened by Pastoral staff using a metal detector wand. This process is in line with the DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.

Phone seen during School

If a student is found in possession of a phone outside a phone pouch, **the phone will be confiscated. A phone call home will be made to remind parents/carers of the school policy. The student will be placed in the Internal Suspension Room (ISR)** for the remainder of the day, or the next day should the incident be later in the day. Non-cooperation will be sanctioned in line with the school behaviour policy. The only exception will be for students with a medical need to check their phone at a certain time, agreed with the Year Team.

Pouch Damage or Lost Pouch

If a student deliberately damages their pouch, we will collect the pouch and confiscate the phone as detailed above. Parents/Carers will have to buy a replacement phone pouch (The cost including delivery is £10.50) via this link - <https://store.schoolphonepouch.co.uk/omega>

Examples of damage:

- Ripped fabric
- Cut fabric
- Torn fabric
- Bent/cut pin
- Signs of force to black button on flap
- Damage to the black button
- Pouch opens without unlocking station

Unlocking Stations

If a student is found in possession of an unlocking station, or a similar strength magnet used to unlock the pouches, this will be considered a serious offence and could lead to a suspension.

Accidental Damage

Please notify the school immediately to explain what happened. If any damage is spotted at a pouch check it will be considered intentional unless the student has raised, it previously.

EXCEPTIONS:

We have a protocol in place for students with exceptional circumstances linked to diagnosed medical needs (e.g. Diabetic students testing blood sugar levels). Any students who are given permission must then adhere to these 'Phone Free School Guidelines' – See 'Phone seen during school' section.

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.

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.

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.