

30th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to provide further details regarding the introduction of phone pouches at Heath Lane Academy. This letter follows my letter earlier in the term. Several local schools have successfully introduced phone pouches, and our approach has been informed by their positive experiences.

As you may be aware, the Department for Education's statutory guidance states that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default and should implement policies that prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, including lessons, social times, breaktimes and lunchtime. The guidance highlights the positive impact that reducing phone use can have on learning, behaviour, wellbeing and safeguarding.

At Heath Lane Academy, our priority is to create an environment where every pupil can Work Hard, Be Kind and Be Respectful, free from unnecessary distractions and able to focus fully on their learning and relationships with others. Following careful consideration, and after reviewing the latest government guidance, we will be introducing a phone pouch system for all pupils from Monday 26th October when we return after half term.

Why are we making this change?

Research and government guidance identify a number of concerns associated with mobile phone use during the school day, including:

- Disruption to learning and reduced concentration
- Risks associated with social media, online bullying and inappropriate communication
- Increased anxiety and reduced face-to-face social interaction
- Safeguarding concerns linked to photography, video recording and online activity.

We want our pupils to be fully engaged in their lessons, build positive relationships with their peers, and enjoy social times without the pressures and distractions that mobile phones can sometimes create.

How will the phone pouches work?

Heath Lane Academy will provide a phone pouch for each pupil free of charge. Replacement pouches will be charged at £10 per pouch.

Pupils will continue to be allowed to bring a mobile phone to school if parents wish them to have one for travelling to and from the Academy.

Principal: Mr M Trimmingham

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On arrival each morning, pupils will place their phone into a secure phone pouch which will be locked for the duration of the school day. The pouch will remain in the pupil's possession, but the phone will be inaccessible until the end of the school day when the pouch is unlocked before pupils leave the site.

This approach supports the government's expectation that schools prohibit the use of phones throughout the school day while also allowing pupils to have access to their phones before and after school.

Supporting pupils and families

We understand that some parents may have concerns about contacting their child during the day. Please be assured that, as is currently the case:

- Parents can contact the Academy at any time through our main reception
- Important messages can be passed to pupils promptly
- Pupils who need to contact home can do so through the appropriate pastoral or administrative staff.

Appropriate exceptions will be considered where a phone is required for a specific medical or educational need, in line with statutory guidance and individual pupil circumstances. Pupils who are young carers have also been considered, and appropriate support will be communicated to these pupils and their parents.

Arrangements for Monday 26th October

Pupils will attend school as normal. Tutors will hand out phone pouches to pupils during tutor period. Pupils will put their phone in their pouch, lock the pouch, and keep the pouch in their bag. Tutors will explain how the pouches work and explain to pupils how to unlock their pouches at the end of the school day.

At the end of the day pupils will be directed to the areas at the exit to school where they can unlock their pouches using the unlock devices. The unlock devices have been located strategically, informed by learning from other schools, to allow this process to be as efficient as possible. Staff will support and provide assistance for those that need it.

Thank you for your continued support. By working together, we can ensure that Heath Lane Academy remains a calm, focused and positive environment where every student can thrive.

Yours sincerely,



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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Mobile Phone Pouches for Secondary School Pupils

This document answers common questions about the introduction of mobile phone pouches.

What is a phone pouch?

A phone pouch is a secure, lockable fabric pouch in which pupils place their mobile phone at the start of the school day. Pupils keep the pouch with them throughout the day, but the phone remains inaccessible until the pouch is unlocked at the end of the school day.

Will pupils still have possession of their phones?

Yes. Pupils keep their phone in their possession at all times. The phone remains securely stored inside the locked pouch, which they carry with them throughout the day.

When will phones be locked away?

Pupils will be required to place their phones in the pouch upon arrival at school or at a designated point at the start of the day. The pouch will remain locked until the end of the school day unless authorised by a member of staff.

How are the pouches unlocked?

Pouches can only be unlocked using designated unlocking stations located in school. Pupils will unlock their pouches at the end of the school day before leaving the site.

Can pupils use their phones during break and lunch?

No. Phones will remain secured in their pouches throughout the entire school day, including breaktimes and lunchtime.

What happens if my child needs to contact me during the day?

If a pupil needs to contact a parent or carer during the school day, they should speak to a member of staff who will help them access appropriate communication methods.

How can I contact my child in an emergency?

Parents and carers can contact the school reception at any time. If there is an emergency or urgent message, reception staff will ensure that the message is passed on to your child promptly.

School Reception Contact Details:

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What if my child has a medical need that requires access to a phone?

The school understands that some pupils may have specific medical, welfare, or accessibility needs. Parents should contact the school to discuss individual circumstances. Appropriate arrangements will be considered where necessary.

What if my child arrives late?

Late-arriving pupils will be required to secure their phone in a pouch when they arrive and before attending lessons.

What happens if a pupil forgets their pouch?

Temporary pouches will be issued.

What if the pouch is damaged or lost?

Pupils are expected to take reasonable care of their pouch. Deliberate damage, tampering or loss may result in sanctions and charges for replacement. Replacement pouches will be charged at £10.

What happens if a pupil refuses to use the pouch?

Pupils who do not follow this policy are not showing respect for their peers or staff. This is against our values and therefore refusal may lead to serious sanctions, including suspension.

Are phones safe inside the pouch?

The pouches are designed to securely store phones during the school day. However, pupils remain responsible for bringing valuable items to school, and parents are encouraged to ensure that phones are appropriately protected.

What if my child accidentally locks their phone in their pouch outside of school time?

We have positioned unlock devices on the outside of our building. They can be accessed when the site is open. The site is open most evenings and many weekends for lettings.