Malbank School & Sixth Form College

Mobile Phone and Phone Pouch Policy

2026-27

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Mobile Phone and Phone Pouch Policy 2026-27

This policy sets out our expectations regarding student mobile phone use during the school day. In line with Department for Education guidance and our commitment to safeguarding and learning, students will **no longer be permitted to use mobile phones at any point while on school premises**. To support this, we are implementing **Secure Lockable Phone Pouches** for every student.

1. **Objectives of this Policy**

- Eliminate distraction from learning caused by mobile phones
- Promote positive behaviour, engagement, and wellbeing
- Prevent misuse of mobile devices, including bullying, filming, upskirting, and academic dishonesty.
- Create a safer school environment and reduce safeguarding risks
- Create an opportunity for young people to have structured time away from screens

2. **Scope -** This policy applies to:

- All students during the school day (including breaktimes and transition periods) and is in effect from the entry point at the rear and front gates of the school.
- All devices capable of communication (phones, smartwatches, earbuds, etc.)
- All areas of the school site including the playing fields and social spaces.

3. **Secure Lockable Phone Pouches – How the System Works**

- Each student will be issued a **personally assigned signal-blocking pouch**
- Students must bring their pouch to school **every day**
- **At the two entry points – the front and back gate**, phones are to be **placed inside and locked** in the pouch under staff supervision
- The pouch remains on the student's person but **cannot be opened until the end of the school day**
- At the end of the final lesson, students will leave site as usual and will **unlock pouches using unlocking stations** which will be placed in numerous positions around the site to ensure

students have the ability to leave the site quickly and calmly whilst being able to get access to their phone.

- If a student leaves school early, the pouch will be unlocked by **reception staff**
- If a pouch is forgotten the phone will be confiscated as per the sanctions listed later in this policy.

4. Expectations of Students

- Bring your pouch every day and use it without exception
- Keep your pouch and phone secure and undamaged
- Follow all staff instructions regarding pouch use
- Do not bring or use any item intended to bypass the system (e.g. second phone, magnets, smartwatches)
- Do not damage or deface the pouch – this is treated as deliberate misconduct

5. Expectations of Staff

- **Enforce pouch use and conduct random checks during tutor time**, including random visual checks
- Conduct **spot checks** during the day if misuse is suspected
- **Support with the unlock process at the end of the day** if you are on duty.
- **Report damage, missing pouches or misuse** to the relevant KS team or Mr Yew.
- Model good behaviour by not using your mobile phone during the school day other than in non-student facing spaces such as offices.

6. Expectations of Parents and Carers

- Ensure your child brings their pouch to school each day
- Reinforce the message that **phones must not be used during the school day**
- Accept that any damage to a pouch will be chargeable
- Use the **school reception as the point of contact** in emergencies – students are not contactable during the day

7. Breaches of Policy – Sanctions

If a student does not have their pouch	Sanction
Pouch **forgotten** – student in possession of phone. **No pouch *or* phone** (student voluntarily leaves both at home)	Confiscation of phone for 1 night (this sanction does not escalate beyond one night) Duty staff to undertake quick bag check and coat/blazer check using metal detecting wand. **No sanction applied.**
Breach of pouch policy	**Sanction**
1. Phone out or seen on site - not placed in pouch	1 day in reflect and phone confiscated for 1 night.
2. Attempting to cheat system (e.g., 2nd phone, unlock tools)	1 day in reflect and phone confiscated for 1 night.
3. Vandalism or damage to pouch	1 day in reflect and phone confiscated for 1 night. **Parents charged for a replacement –** Phone must be kept at home until replacement is in place or it will be treated as **"**Pouch forgotten – student in possession of phone" - see above.
Persistent non-compliance	**Escalating sanctions including potential suspension for sanctions 1,2 and 3.**
2nd incident	1 day in reflect and phone confiscated for 3 nights.
3rd incident	1 day suspension and phone confiscated for 4 nights.
4th incident	2-day suspension and phone confiscated for 5 nights.

Forgotten pouch – This will result in an overnight confiscation as noted above

1) If a parent has a genuine concern that their child may regularly forget their pouch, *particularly* if this is due to an identified special need, they are welcome to purchase a second pouch. This can be clearly labelled with the student's name, brought to school and stored securely in the relevant Key Stage office.

Should the student forget their primary pouch, they would then have a backup pouch available and would not receive the sanction. They would, however, need to return the spare pouch to the office at the end of the day, otherwise there is a risk that both pouches end up at home and the safety net disappears. Please see section 11 – Replacement links for further details.

2) If a student forgets their pouch, a parent or carer may bring it into school during the day before the start of lunchtime. In those circumstances, once the pouch arrives and the phone is secured appropriately, it would be entirely reasonable for the student to have their phone returned

and continue their day as normal. Please note that if the pouch is brought in after the start of lunch (allowing us time to process the return of the phone during the lunch period) – the overnight confiscation sanction would still stand.

Sanction lengths

Please note that for all sanctions – **1 night** refers to one school night – i.e. a working day. Where any sanction runs into a weekend, phones will not be returned – see examples below.

Example 1: Student involved in 3rd incident of pouch/phone misuse on a Monday and the phone is confiscated for 4 nights. This would mean the phone is confiscated for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday night and would not be returned to the student until the end of school on Friday.

Example 2: Student involved in 2nd incident of pouch/phone misuse on a Thursday and the phone is confiscated for 3 nights. This would mean the phone is confiscated for Thursday, Friday and Monday night and would not be returned to the student until the end of school on Tuesday.

Example 3: Student involved in 1st incident of pouch/phone misuse on a Friday and the phone is confiscated for 1 night. This would mean the phone is confiscated for Friday night and would not be returned to the student until the end of school on Monday.

8. Legal basis and proportionality of sanctions

The sanctions set out above are applied in accordance with the school's statutory powers and national guidance. Under the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, schools have the authority to confiscate items, including mobile phones, where they are used in breach of school rules. This is supported by the Department for Education's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation, which confirms that schools may determine how long items are retained, provided that this is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.

There is no fixed legal time limit on the duration of confiscation. Instead, the law requires schools to apply professional judgement and to ensure that any sanction is reasonable and proportionate. This policy therefore sets out a clear and staged approach to support consistency and fairness across the school.

The school reserves the right to vary the duration of confiscation where it is necessary to take account of individual circumstances, including safeguarding considerations. This will be a school decision not a parental one.

Parents and carers can access the relevant government guidance here:

- Searching, screening and confiscation in schools (DfE)
- Mobile phones in schools guidance (DfE)

9. Emergencies

In an emergency, parents must contact school reception. There will be no opportunity for parents to contact students on a mobile device as they will be in lockable pouches for the whole school day.

If a student requires urgent contact with home, staff will facilitate this through their ability to allow access to an unlock station in the following areas:
Key stage 3, Key Stage 4, Student Services and Connect.

10. Exceptions

Any required exceptions (e.g. for medical reasons) must be agreed in writing with the Headteacher.

These will be rare and handled discreetly – adaptations will be in place for instance for students who require the ability to monitor health conditions such as diabetes via a mobile app.

Students attending Malbank Sixth Form are exempt from the requirement to use phone pouches. They are expected to only use their phones in the Sixth form area (C block). If they are found to be using their phone outside of this area of the school, appropriate sanctions will be put into place.

Staff may take the decision to allow the reasonable use of mobile phones during trips and whilst students are representing the school at sporting events. This will be monitored by staff and boundaries and expectations will be set depending on the context of the trip or event.

Any mobile phone confiscated on the final school day before a half-term, Christmas, Easter or summer holiday will be returned to the student before they leave site that day. **Overnight confiscations will not be carried over into a holiday period.**

11. Replacement link

Parents can purchase replacement pouches using the following link **https://store.schoolphonepouch.co.uk/cornovii** or QR code if a pouch is permanently lost or damaged meaning a replacement is needed. This transaction is direct between you and the company and the cost of a replacement pouch will be £8.75 plus £1.99 postage and packaging, with delivery made directly to the pupil's home address.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and reviewed annually or in response to updated DfE guidance.