



26 November 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Introduction of lockable Mobile Phone Pouches from January 2025

You will be aware that our school behaviour policy prohibits the use of mobile phones during the school day. This plays an important role in the safeguarding of all our students. More recently, there has been a growing awareness of the potentially harmful effects of smartphones on young people's mental, physical and academic well-being, including:

- possible exposure to harmful on-line content
- challenges regarding behavioural addiction issues relating to devices/content
- academic distraction
- possible exposure to grooming activity
- issues relating to cyber bullying
- the development of, and triggering of, mental illness
- possible opportunity cost/wasted time

Many of these concerns have been highlighted by Mr Roberts at our recent Parent Information Evenings. Therefore, following consultation with key stakeholder groups, and as part of our ongoing work to support student wellbeing, we will be introducing an additional layer of safety regarding mobile phones during the school day.

From 06 January 2025, all students in Years 7-11 will be provided with a mobile phone pouch and will be required to place their mobile phone in this for the duration of the school day. The pouch safely locks the phone away and students will then keep this pouch in their school bag.

Students will be expected to store their phone in the pouch before they enter the school site and then will have access to an unlocking station as they exit the school site at the end of the day. (Please note, there is no expectation for students to use pouches for evening based activities at the school after 6pm).

Students will be responsible for bringing their mobile phone pouch to school every day as essential equipment. If a student forgets their mobile phone pouch, they will have to hand in their phone for collection at the end of the school day.

We will be updating our behaviour policy for the start of January to reflect this change, including sanctions should students transgress these expectations. The pouches will remain the property of the school.

Please rest assured it will always be possible for your child to contact you in case of an emergency or change of arrangements. Should you need to communicate urgently with your child, please phone the school office who will pass the message on as required.

Students in the Sixth Form will not be issued with phone pouches, but they will only be able to use phones during break and lunchtimes, in designated Sixth Form areas.

We will be going through these expectations in more detail with our students during assemblies and in tutor time prior to the Christmas break. Parents/carers can find out more information using [this FAQs link](#).

You will be aware that many schools have been reviewing how they might strengthen the expectation that schools are 'mobile phone free' environments. At Ashlyns, we have been evaluating different options and are confident this next step is the right approach for our school community at this point in time. We believe it will have a positive impact on student wellbeing and behaviour, and support improved focus in lessons along with promoting further engagement in wider opportunities.

By introducing this additional measure for all students in years 7-11, we hope it will signal the collective work of the school community in establishing a phone free environment, whilst recognising parental choice in students having access to a phone on the journey to and from school.

We appreciate your support in helping us implement this new measure.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shapland', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James Shapland
Headteacher