



Bishop Young CofE Academy

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Principal: Ms Rachael Lacey-Cole

14th July 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Bishop Young Academy, the Behaviour for Learning Policy clearly states that students are not allowed to use their phone at any time during the school day. Although there have been a small minority of pupils who flout this rule, the issues caused by mobile phone use, and our awareness of this, have significantly increased over the last two years. This includes increased screen time, and in some cases, addiction to device use, concentration and wellbeing challenges, distraction from learning, and communication occurring within learning and structured social time that is not appropriate or relevant to the core business of school.

We have made all pupils aware that we have been considering alternative approaches, as mobile phone-related issues continue to have a negative impact on the education and wellbeing of children and young people.

Following careful consideration and in line with government guidance, we have decided to update our mobile phone policy to better support and protect our pupils. From September 2026, all pupils in Years 7 to 11 will be required to use a mobile phone pouch during the school day.

We recognise that this change may cause some anxiety for pupils who are used to having immediate access to their phones. For this reason, we have invested in secure mobile phone pouches, allowing pupils to keep their phones with them throughout the day while preventing their use during school hours. This approach helps reduce concerns about being separated from their devices, while ensuring that mobile phones do not disrupt learning, wellbeing, or the wider school environment.

Reasons for this decision

Despite having a long-established expectation within the school that phones should not be seen or used during the school day, the issues related to phone use have now reached a point that means the current situation is unsustainable.

We are increasingly seeing the significant negative impact on the wellbeing and behaviours of children and young people associated with mobile phone use, both in and out of school. For some time, we have observed an increase in the time taken up in resolving issues related to social media use outside school, which leads to conflict in school.

Evidence from studies shows that social media can cause significant mental health and wellbeing issues for young people and this is now also evident with our primary children. As a school, we share these concerns about how social media is impacting pupils.

Social media use has grown significantly in recent years and there is a suggestion from experts that children and young people are becoming 'addicted'. Research suggests that young people are increasingly becoming heavy users of social media, often spending more than five hours per day on social networking sites. They are now more likely to report poor mental health, including symptoms of anxiety and depression, as a result.





Alongside the concern for the wellbeing of children and young people, mobile phone use can be a distraction to learning, social development and the effective operation of the school. Social issues, bullying and abuse are more common and are made worse due to social media, group chats and mobile phones. Inevitably, the time taken to resolve these issues in school takes staff away from supporting others. Removing the ability to use phones in school will also remove the disruption to learning caused by the distraction of mobile phones.

Schools who have already introduced phone pouches have found a significant improvement in the social skills of children and young people, much improved concentration in lessons and they report that children and young people are happier and less likely to experience anxiety.

How does it work?

The phone pouches are designed and made by a company called Phone Locker who support schools and entertainment venues across the world. The pouch can only be unlocked with an unlocking device and whilst the phone is in the pouch, the signal is blocked. Any calls or messages sent to the phone during the school day will not be received until the pouch is unlocked as your child leaves the building.

- At the start of the school year, your child will receive a numbered mobile phone locking pouch issued by Bishop Young Academy.
- Your child must bring the pouch to school every day.
- When they arrive at school, they must place the following items inside the pouch:
 - Their mobile phone.
 - Earbuds or headphones.
 - Any wearable smart devices, such as smartwatches or smart glasses.
- They will lock the pouch.
- The locked pouch stays inside their school bag throughout the school day.
- Every student must bring a bag to school, as the pouch should not be visible while on the premises.
- Your child cannot access their phone or other smart devices during the school day.
- When school finishes and students leave the building, they can use an unlocking device to open the pouch and retrieve their belongings.
- If your child forgets their pouch, they will be expected to hand their phone into student reception, where it will be kept in the school safe.
- If students report that they do not have a phone with them, they will be expected to prove this.

In short, the school is introducing a system that allows students to keep their phones with them but locked away and inaccessible during the school day.

There will be a series of assemblies before we break up in July to explain this policy change to our children and young people.

Consequences

Students who fail to adhere to the new policy will be given the opportunity to correct their behaviour, however, if they continue to refuse to comply, they will be subject to the following sanctions:

- **First offence:** 1 day in RFI. The mobile phone will be confiscated and returned to the pupil on Friday.



- Second offence: 1 day in RFI. The mobile phone will be confiscated, and a parent or carer will be required to collect it from school the following week.
- Third offence: A suspension will be issued. The mobile phone will be confiscated and retained by the school until the end of the half term, when it must be collected by a parent or carer.

Do I have to pay for a pouch?

Phone pouches are being introduced in hundreds of schools across the country, and most schools expect pupils to pay for the phone pouch, as they are making it part of their Uniform Policy. However, we want to save families from this additional cost, so your child will be provided with a pouch at the beginning of every academic year.

If a pouch is lost or deliberately damaged by pupils, however, a cost of 25.00 for a replacement will be passed on to parents and carers.

How will I contact my child during the day?

You are already advised to contact either the school office by phone, or ideally, we ask that parents and carers email info@bishopyoungacademy.co.uk in the first instance if you need to get a message to your child. A member of staff will then ensure that this message is passed on. This process will remain in place from September when the phone pouches are introduced. Any non-urgent messages can still be sent to your child's mobile number; however, they will only receive the message as they leave school.

Can I request an exemption for my child?

We are already aware of pupils who have a medical need that requires them to access their phone, and an adaptation will be made to their risk assessment in these cases allowing them to keep their mobile phones on their person and allowing them to manage their wellbeing. This exemption applies to a very small number of pupils who use their phone to monitor paired medical devices. These pupils will use a 'medical pouch' which looks the same as the others but will allow them to access their phone if their medical implant sends an alert.

We will work with the pupils concerned and their families to put a bespoke plan in place in these cases – Mr Coone will contact these families to explain the process and reassure them that this will meet the medical needs of their child.

There will be no other exemptions.

Further information

We have provided an FAQ sheet also attached, and on the school website, which will answer many of the questions you may have. If you cannot find the information you require, please do not hesitate to contact us by emailing info@bishopyoungacademy.co.uk



This will be a big change to the way we work and there may be some teething problems to begin with, so please be patient. I would like to thank you in advance for your support in this matter and look forward to hearing your feedback once we commence using the mobile phone pouches in the summer term.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "R. Cole".

Ms Rachael Lacey-Cole
Principal

