

Frequently asked questions for parents/carers

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| <i>How is the mobile phone policy changing?</i> | The current policy states that if a student brings their mobile phone to school, it is switched off and kept in their school bag. This will change to the mobile phone being switched off, placed in a Focus Pouch that is then closed and kept in their school bag. The new policy takes effect on Monday 5 th January 2026. |
| <i>When will students be given a Focus pouch?</i> | All students in Years 7-11 will receive their Focus pouch, which they will sign for, during PM tutor time on Wednesday 17 th (Hawking House only) and Thursday 18 th December 2025. Students must bring their pouch to school every day from Monday 5 th January 2026. |
| <i>What if students need to contact a parent during the day? What if school needs to contact parents/carers?</i> | As is our current policy, students should go to the Student Reception to contact home and parents should phone Main Reception. We have very clear procedures in place for when a student is unwell, as assessed by our First Aid team. Parents/carers will be contacted by our First Aid team. |
| <i>What if my child has a medical need that requires their mobile phone?</i> | Your child will be issued with a Velcro pouch to enable them access when they require their mobile phone. |
| <i>My child needs their mobile phone to support their mental health; will they be allowed access to their device?</i> | Research shows that mobile phones have a negative impact on mental health and in some cases exacerbate any challenges young people face. Please read our Parents Against Phone Addiction in Young Adolescents (PAPAYA) and Smart Phone Free Child information on the link below: Smartphone Free at KS1, 2 C 3 - Cheltenham Bournside School |

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| <i>I have heard that the magnets used on a Focus pouch damage phone.</i> | <p>This is not true.</p> <p>You may have heard reports of phones being damaged when in pouches. The pouches are not protective cases and so should be treated with the same care as a phone not in a Focus pouch. Damage can occur if a student drops their pouch on the floor for example, as it would if they dropped their phone on the floor.</p> <p>As pouches should be in bags at all times, we don't anticipate this being an issue as there is no reason to have them out till the end of the school day when unlocking takes place.</p> |
| <i>Where will the unlocking stations be?</i> | <p>There will be unlocking stations at the following areas of the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In lockable boxes on the walls of tutor rooms - Reception and Attendance offices - Mobile unlocking devices will be used on school trips (see below) - H block quad, for use after assemblies |
| <i>If my child leaves school late due to clubs, revision sessions or detention; how will they unlock their pouch?</i> | <p>When students attend a club, students will be escorted off site through the Parks and Hawking gate or through PE where they can use a magnet to unlock their pouch. At the end of detention, the member of staff will have a mobile magnet to unlock pouches.</p> |
| <i>What happens if my child arrives in school in the morning and their pouch is locked?</i> | <p>When pouches are empty, they should be left unlocked. If an empty pouch is locked, the student will need to unlock their pouch in their AM tutor room.</p> |
| <i>What happens if a student forgets their pouch?</i> | <p>If a student leaves their pouch at home, they will be given a loan pouch by the BRC. Just like our loan uniform, the loan pouch will need to be returned the same day. If the pouch is damaged or lost, parents/carers will be charged £20 which will be debited from their MCAS account.</p> |

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| <i>How will staff know phones are in the pouches? What about smart watches; What happens if they leave a pouch at home; How do we ensure they only have one phone?</i> | <p>During AM tutor time, students will place their pouch on the desk with their phone inside and locked for staff to check each morning. If a student arrives late to school, Attendance/late gate staff will check the student pouches before students enter school site. All wearable technology will be unusable due to the connection to the mobile phone being blocked by the Focus pouch, standalone smart watches will be permitted.</p> <p>Spot checks will be carried out by SLT on referral in a range of lessons each week.</p> |
| <i>What sanction will be incurred if a mobile phone is found on school site outside of a pouch?</i> | The sanction that we put in place for students found with their phone outside of a pouch will be Level 4: Serious Defiance. In most circumstances this will incur a suspension from school. |
| <i>How will after school trips work? E.g. sports fixtures.</i> | Mobile phones will be in pouches on school trips, unless there is a circumstance when they are required. We would expect staff to use their professional judgement on trips and we will supply a pouch unlocking device as part of all trip packs. |
| <i>Will parents have to replace a lost pouch? Will parents have to replace a pouch that has been damaged intentionally?</i> | Yes. Replacement pouches will be charged via MCAS at a cost of £20 per pouch. These can be purchased from the BRC (parents must email BRC@bournside.com to inform) |
| <i>Will parents have to replace a pouch that has been unintentionally damaged?</i> | The devices have a warranty that can be found here: FOCUS-POUCH LIMITED WARRANTY (1).pdf |
| <i>How will Art photography lessons be impacted?</i> | Art Photography will have an unlocking station to allow students to use their mobile phone cameras whilst supervised by their teacher. |
| <i>If they cannot use their phone, how can students see their timetable during the school day?</i> | We provide students with a small timetable and replacement timetables can be collected from student reception. |
| <i>Will all classes have working clocks as a lot of students use their phones to tell the time?</i> | Yes. |
| <i>What about staff use of phones?</i> | We will encourage staff to follow the same mobile phone-free policy around the school, wherever possible. Pastoral staff do use their phones to communicate with one another in emergency situations. |
| <i>What happens if there is a critical incident during the school day?</i> | Students will be directed to leave school site and will be able to use the magnets as they leave. School will contact parents/carers. |



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| <i>Will cover and/or supply teaching staff follow the procedure?</i> | SLT and House Teams are always made aware when there is a cover teacher for an AM tutor group and will prioritise visiting these tutor groups. As the phones are locked away during the day, there should be no instances of a cover teacher not following procedure during lessons. |
| <i>How do we know this will have a positive impact?</i> | Please read our Smart Phone Free web page here: <u>Smartphone Free at KS1, 2 C 3 - Cheltenham Bournside School</u> |