

Mobile Phone Pouch Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What do the mobile phone pouches look like and how do they work?**

Children and young people will collect a pouch as they enter the building and put their mobile device, including ear buds, into the pouch. They will then lock the pouch by pressing the button at the top.

This is then locked for the day and phone signals are blocked. The pouches are unlocked on the way out of the building at unlocking points.



2. **Do you have to pay for the pouch?**

No, Appleton Academy has purchased a pouch for each child in Years 5 to 11. If we asked parents to pay for them, this would be an additional cost to families on top of existing uniform costs when finances are already challenging for many families.

3. **Do we have to pay to replace it if we break it?**

Yes, there will be a charge of £25.00 to replace the pouch if it is lost or damaged.

4. **If your phone breaks in the pouch, is it school's fault?**

No, the pouch is sturdy and padded and will protect your phone during the normal school day. Children and young people remain responsible for the care of their personal possessions if they choose to bring them to school.

5. **What if you accidentally forget to unlock your phone pouch when you leave school?**

Pupils will unlock their phone as they leave school and the pouches will be collected in. Duty staff will remind children and young people of where to unlock and hand in their pouches. The duty staff outside will be carrying unlocking devices so you can also ask any member of staff on duty to do this as you leave. Otherwise, you will need to unlock it when next in school.

6. **What would happen if my child doesn't bring their phone to school?**

If your child doesn't bring their phone to school, they will not need to use a phone pouch. However, we will carry out checks on whether students have a phone with them when they arrive. If students deliberately attempt to avoid these measures and are found using a phone, additional sanctions will apply.

7. **Can I personalise my pouch?**

No, the pouches remain the property of the school and have been designed with the Appleton logo on them. You are borrowing the pouch for the day and must not doodle, write or draw on it in any way. Staff will check for pouches that have been vandalised and this is likely to lead to a sanction and the cost for the damaged pouch being recharged to parents/carers.

8. Will the pouches fit all phone sizes?

Yes, and ear buds should fit in the pouches as well.

9. Where will I put my pouch once it is locked?

Primary children will keep their pouch in their tray. Young people in secondary will be advised to keep their pouch in the pocket on the inside of their blazer. Alternatively, it should go into a school bag.

10. Can my child have an exemption?

There will be no exemptions but there will be an adaptation to the phone pouches for a very small number of pupils who have a medical device, such as a Continuous Glucose Monitor, which requires them to have a phone which alerts them when there is an issue. These young people will still be expected to be 'phone free' but they will use a specially designed medical pouch that will receive the signal from the CGM and allow for their medical condition to be monitored. This will be tested to ensure it is working and then will form part of their risk assessment. The medical pouch has the same design as the signal blocking pouch.

An adaptation will only be considered for pupils with an implanted medical device that requires a phone signal to monitor a medical condition.

11. Will this be the only exemption? Are all other pupils expected to use a signal blocking phone pouch?

There may be pupils who need to check their bloods during the day, and these young people may use an app to record and support this. We will work with pupils in this case to establish a process for unlocking their device for periods of time to allow this.

Pupils with an exemption or an adaptation will be supported by Mrs Rutherford, School Healthcare Practitioner.

12. Will I be able to unlock phones during the day at the station if there's an emergency or I need to speak to my parent/carer?

No, if you need to contact home this should be done through the pastoral office.

13. What if I want to reach my child during the school day?

Your child is engaged in their learning and can't answer their phone. If you need to contact your child during the school day, contact the main office on 01274 600550 or preferably by emailing info@appletonacademy.co.uk in the first instance.

14. What if there is a school emergency such as a fire or a lockdown situation?

In case of a school emergency, we direct our pupils to safety first, following our school emergency protocols. Your child does not need their phone to follow this.

Our current policy on emergency evacuation and invacuation is that phones should be switched off and kept in bags, so this should not represent a change in how we manage such emergency situations. The Academy has clear site evacuation and invacuation procedures that pupils and staff are familiar with. In such instances, pupils must please follow the instructions of staff so that they can keep themselves and others safe. Mobile phones would actually be very unhelpful in such situations and could increase their risk of harm.

It is also the case that we ask parents not to attempt to contact school or their children in the event of emergencies, as this can hinder the processes taking place in school and could, in fact, put your child at increased risk. We will contact all parents, using existing protocols, when it is safe to do so in the event of an emergency on site.

15. What happens if you can't unlock my phone pouch?

The pouches we have chosen are used across the world by millions of people in schools, workplaces, sports events and music venues. The technology is simple and very reliable.

16. What happens if I spill something on the pouch?

This shouldn't happen as it will be in the inside pocket in your blazer. However, accidents do happen and the pouch will be replaced and the previous one cleaned and left to dry out.

17. What if I need my phone for a bus pass or my timetable?

By the time you need to catch your bus, you will have unlocked your phone and left school. You will then have access to your bus pass.

All pupils are given a journal and your timetable is in the front. If you lose your journal, speak to the pastoral team and they will be able to let you know your timetable for the day.

18. What if you need to leave school during the day (dentist for example) and need to open the pouch?

You will be escorted to the main office as usual by a member of duty staff. The admin team will be able to unlock and collect your pouch once you have signed out.

19. What happens if I refuse to use the pouch?

You will be given the opportunity to rethink your actions. If you continue to refuse, this will be dealt with through the Behaviour for Learning Policy. Refusal to comply with the mobile phone policy may ultimately lead to a suspension from school for continued refusal to follow policies and work with us.

20. What if I bring my phone but hide it instead of using a pouch?

Again, you will be given the opportunity to rethink your actions and if you continue to claim you do not have a phone in school when we suspect that you do, you will be screened for your mobile phone in line with [DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools](#).

21. What happens if I receive a call during the day and haven't turned my phone off?

The phonerlocker pouch will block all mobile phone signals and we would not hear any notifications. If a phone related sound was heard, this would lead us to assume a pupil has an additional phone hidden or not in the pouch. If this is the case, the phone will then be confiscated until a parent can collect it. An appropriate sanction will be issued at an elevated level due to the nature of the number of rules that would have been ignored for this to happen.

22. Can people bring in a magnet to just unlock it?

No, there is a specific type of magnet required to unlock the pouch. If you try to unlock your phone using another device, you are very likely to damage your phone. Anyone who tries to break the pouch open is causing deliberate damage to school property and this will be dealt with in the same way as if they refused to use the pouch. In addition, there will be a charge of £25.00 to replace the damaged pouch.

23. What if I am late to school? How does that work?

All pupils should be at school by 8.40am, to ensure they are on time for their form session. If you are late, report to the secondary entrance as usual and you will be given a pouch once you have signed in.

24. What happens if there is a long queue to get into school and I am late for form?

In September, there will be two doors for pupils to use and the process will be explained in advance to make sure everyone knows what to do and which door to use. There may be some delays at the start of the year as we get used to the new process but we anticipate that any queues will move quickly.

25. How quick is the unlocking process?

The unlocking process is quick and takes under a second per pupil. The exit procedures have been carefully planned to make this a smooth process, however, at the start of the year, this may take a little longer.

Duty staff will be on hand at the unlocking stations to keep people moving but we will keep the process under review and make changes if we need to.

26. What happens if I have a detention?

If you are issued with a detention, you will be escorted to the detention room with your belongings as usual. At the end of the detention, a member of staff will take you to the exit door and unlock your phone pouch using a mobile device.

If you walk out of detention or refuse to comply, your phone will not be unlocked until the following day.