

The Milton Keynes Academy

Hush Pouches for Mobile Phones

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

If you need any clarification on the information below, or if a translation would be helpful, please use the following link: <https://translate.google.com/>. Please note that this tool is provided for convenience, and the Academy cannot take responsibility for the accuracy of its translations.

About the Hush Pouch

- **What is a Hush pouch?**

The Hush Pouch is a secure, signal-blocking bag that is used to store an individual's mobile device and other digital devices (such as smartwatches and earbuds). It is secured and unlocked with a special magnetic locking device.

- **Why is the school introducing Hush pouches?**

Our school is seeking to limit distractions in the classroom and improve overall student engagement, mental health and well-being.

- **My child has a smartwatch. Why does it also need to be placed in the pouch if the phone is already in there, or if the watch only connects via Bluetooth?**

Some smartwatches have many of the same capabilities as mobile phones, such as internet access, messaging, notifications, voice recording and the ability to store or transmit information. In some cases, they can be used independently of a phone. It isn't possible for staff to reasonably and reliably determine which watches have these capabilities and which do not. Additionally, allowing some smartwatches and not others would be difficult to manage consistently and fairly. Therefore, in order to maintain fairness, consistency and prevent distractions, all smart devices must be treated in the same way as mobile phones. This ensures a consistent approach and avoids loopholes that could still occur via wearable technology.

- **Will students' devices be safe?**

The pouches will remain in possession of each student. It is their responsibility to look after their pouch at all times.

- **What if a student requires exceptional use of their phone, e.g. for medical reasons?**

Students with a documented medical condition requiring a device for monitoring (e.g. diabetes) will be issued a non-locking, Velcro Hush Pouch.

- **Will students be able to listen to music?**

No, the Hush pouches block all mobile phone signals and internet access. All Bluetooth devices, including earbuds and other headphones, must be stored in the Hush pouch.

- **How will students get to their lessons on time without access to their smartwatch or their phone?**

Students have four minutes to transition between lessons. Music is played during lesson transition to help students keep track of time and move promptly between lessons. Lesson transition time begins when the music starts playing and lasts for its duration. By the time the music stops, students are expected to be in their lessons. There is no change to this existing system.

- **How will students receive a Hush pouch?**

In June 2026, all students will be assigned a Hush pouch to secure their phones, smartwatches and earbuds. The pouch is the property of the Academy and is considered on loan to the student during the school year. Students are responsible for the Hush pouch at all times; this includes bringing the pouches to and from school each day and keeping them in good condition.

- **How will students know whose Hush pouch is whose?**

At distribution, each student will write their name on their pouch. Hush staff will assist school administrators to ensure a smooth distribution process. Students will be required to keep their pouches with them at all times while at school.

- **Will students be able to access laptops or computers to support learning?**

Yes. Students will continue to access school laptops and computers. The school remains committed to using technology responsibly to support academic success.

- **What if my child uses their phone to check their timetable?**

All students will be provided with a printed copy of their timetable to keep with them during the school day. This will ensure they can easily access their schedule without needing to use their phone.

- **Are you introducing Hush Pouches as a disciplinary measure?**

Not at all. The intention of introducing Hush Pouches is to:

- Minimise distractions and support a calm, focused learning environment.
- Reduce inappropriate or unsafe device use during the school day.
- Encourage positive social interaction and more face-to-face communication.
- Support student wellbeing by limiting exposure to online pressures during school hours.
- Keep mobile phones safe while still allowing students to have them for travel to and from school.

- **Will parents and carers be expected to purchase a Hush pouch for their child?**

The Academy will provide all students with their first Hush pouch free of charge. Parents and carers will only be expected to purchase replacement pouches for their child if their pouch is lost, intentionally damaged or vandalised, at a cost of £15 per pouch which is payable via Arbor Pay.

- **Who is responsible for replacement Hush pouches?**

Students are responsible for the care of their Hush pouch. Parents and carers are responsible for any replacements, even if the pouch is lost or stolen. If a student intentionally damages the pouch, they will face disciplinary consequences, in addition to their parent or carer needing to pay for a replacement.

- **What happens if my child doesn't have their Hush pouch?**

Any student without a Hush pouch will need to hand in their phone to duty staff at the start of the day and collect it from student reception at the end of the day, with no exceptions.

Using the Hush Pouch

- **How will the process work on arriving and leaving school?**

Upon entering school, students will turn their phone off, place the phone inside the Hush pouch, and lock it in front of the designated staff. The pouches will be unlocked at the end of the school day at several designated locations within the exit corridor towards the back gate.

- **How is the "end of the school day" defined?**

The end of the day is 3:22pm. Students leaving school before 3:22pm will be able to unlock their phones as they leave via student reception.

- **What if a student needs to leave before the end of the school day?**

If a student needs to leave school early for an approved early dismissal, including medical appointments, emergencies or school trips, they will be able to unlock their devices at school just prior to their departure. If returning to school later on that day, the Hush pouch will be locked upon re-entry to the building.

- **What will the process be for students attending clubs or interventions after school?**

Students who remain in school after 3:22pm for clubs or interventions will be able to unlock their devices when they leave school.

- **What if students forget to unlock their devices before leaving school?**

Staff will remind students to unlock their devices before leaving school. If they forget to unlock the pouch, they will need to return to school before the gates close to unlock it, otherwise the pouch will remain locked until the following morning.

- **Will students who travel home by bus be given priority?**

Adequate unlocking stations will ensure that all students, including those travelling by bus, can leave on time.

- **How will queues be managed at unlocking stations?**

Multiple unlocking stations will be strategically located in high-traffic areas to avoid delays.

Communication and Emergencies

- **Can students unlock their devices during the school day in case of an emergency?**

No. Students who need to contact home must do so through the school office.

- **What if a student needs to contact a parent or carer urgently?**

Students needing to make urgent contact with their parents or carers will be able to do so via the school office in line with our school policy. This approach ensures that communication is managed efficiently and that staff can offer appropriate support or guidance. This aspect is not a change to current policy.

- **What if a parent or carer needs to get into contact with their child during the school day?**

We understand that emergencies will occur. Parents and carers may contact the Academy at 01908 341700 to speak with their child if the need arises.

- **What happens if there is an emergency at school?**

Our staff are trained to execute safety and emergency procedures. Students will follow the school's emergency procedures in the case of an emergency. In the event of an emergency or lock down, the emergency procedures require that students and staff remain silent, however the Academy will communicate with parents via Arbor; therefore, **please ensure that contact details are up to date via the app.**

In the event of an emergency or lockdown situation, please do not call the school or come to the school site, as this may compromise safety procedures.

- **How would students open their pouches in the event of a building-wide emergency if returning to the building is not possible?**

There will be mobile unlocking devices available for these types of circumstances.

Rules and Responsibilities

- **What happens if a Hush Pouch is lost, damaged or misused?**

If the pouch is lost, intentionally vandalised, damaged or tampered with, the parent or carer must pay the £15 replacement cost via Arbor Pay and the student will face disciplinary action. Students who unlock the pouch at unauthorised times or use a secondary device will also face disciplinary action.

- **What happens if a student refuses to use the pouch or is carrying an extra device?**

Misuse or refusal to use the pouch will be treated as defiance and managed under the Academy's Behaviour Policy. Staff will carry out regular spot checks. If staff reasonably suspect that a student is carrying a device outside of their locked pouch, a search will be carried out in line with legislation. If a device is found, consequences will follow according to the Behaviour Policy.

- **What if a student forgets their Hush Pouch?**

If a student arrives without their pouch, their mobile phone must be handed in to duty staff and will be secured in the school safe until the end of the day. Phones can be collected by students at the end of the day from student reception.