

“Everything is possible for one who believes”

MARK 9:23

Bradford Forster Academy
A Church of England Academy



PWG/DST/RMW

28th March 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to inform you about an important change we are introducing at **Bradford Forster Academy** from **Monday 29th June 2026**, all students will be required to store their mobile phones in secure phone pouches for the duration of the school day.

Research has found that learning, safeguarding and social behaviour improve drastically when students are fully engaged with their teachers and other students, without the distraction of mobile phones. I am sure you will agree that this is something we all want for your children and our school.

This decision is part of a wider initiative across BDAT and follows strengthened guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) on creating mobile phone free school environments. Please see this link for more information - [DfE New guidance on mobile phones in schools](#)

Bradford Forster Academy will become a phone free school utilising phone pouches from **Monday 29th June 2026**.

The secure phone pouches system has been implemented in thousands of schools to facilitate an engaged and safer learning environment. Bradford schools have also successfully implemented the same systems, and we are confident the secure lockable phone pouches will have a positive impact at **Bradford Forster Academy** as well. Other secondary schools within BDAT are adopting the same scheme and we are collectively working together to prepare for this change.

The system uses a simple, safe and secure pouch that stores a phone. Every student will secure their phone in a secure pouch when they arrive at school. Students will keep their phones and will not be able to use them until their pouches are opened at the end of the school day. Students are responsible for their pouch and therefore their secured phone during school hours.

This is a significant change to national school policy and one which I am sure parents and carers will support us with as we continue to improve the quality of education provided for the young people in our care.

Headteacher: Mr D Styles

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A recent survey of over 900 schools measured the effects of creating phone-free educational environments. These schools achieved notable progress in multiple areas:

- **65% of schools saw an improvement in academic performance**
- **74% of schools saw an improvement in student behaviour**
- **83% of schools saw an improvement in student engagement in the classroom**
- **86% of schools saw a positive impact on student safety and wellness**

Where any student fails to comply with the daily practices around placing mobile phones into pouches, refuses to follow school policy or is seen to be deliberately damaging their pouch, sanctions will be applied in line with our Behaviour Policy and a replacement pouch will be expected to be purchased by parents at a charge of £8.75. Given the large investment in keeping the school phone free and allowing students to stay focussed, if students do not hand in their phone, and/or are found with a phone on their person, then they are at risk of receiving a fixed term suspension.

We appreciate your full support as we implement this initiative adopting secure phone pouches at Bradford Forster Academy. By working together, we can create a calmer, safer and more focused learning environment for all our students which is something that we all want to see.

If, after reading the attached FAQ document, you have any further questions, please email them to us on our usual address at info@bfa.bdat-academies.org and we will respond in due course.

As always, if there is an emergency and you would like to get in contact with your child, please contact reception on 01274 302400.

Yours faithfully



Mr D Styles
Headteacher

FAQs

What if my child uses their phone to monitor blood sugar levels as they are diagnosed as diabetic? Students with a diagnosis of diabetes with medical evidence provided to school will be issued with a specific pouch which will enable them to continue to monitor their blood sugar levels as required.

Why are we introducing phone pouches?

The DfE's revised guidance on mobile phones states that *"all schools should be mobile phone free environments by default"* and provides detailed expectations for prohibiting phone use during lessons, transitions, breaktimes and lunchtimes.

The use of phone pouches is one of the most successful approaches highlighted in national case studies and has been adapted across the BDAT secondary schools as an effective way of ensuring that students cannot access their devices during school hours, while still allowing them to bring a phone for safety when travelling to and from school.

Therefore, as a Trust and a school we are acting in line with the Department for Education guidance.

How will this support my child's learning?

Research has demonstrated that phone-free learning environments help minimise distractions, improve behaviour and support positive learning habits, leading to improvement in pupils' engagement in learning and promoting positive outcomes.

How will this support my child's wellbeing and social interaction?

Research shared in the DfE's guidance concludes that excessive phone use can reduce social interaction, disrupt sleep patterns, and contribute to lower wellbeing among young people. Creating a phone-free school day encourages pupils to engage with peers, focus on learning, and participate fully in school life.

How does the phone pouch system work?

- Students bring their phones to school as normal.
- Upon arrival, they will secure their phone inside a lockable pouch.
- The pouch stays sealed for the entire school day and can only be unlocked using a device held by staff at the end of the day.
- Students retain responsibility for their devices; the pouch simply restricts access during school hours.

What are the benefits of the phone pouch approach?

- Ensures phone-free learning while maintaining safety for travel to and from school
- Provides a consistent approach across the Trust
- Reduces low level disruption linked to notifications, messaging, and social media
- Supports safeguarding by preventing inappropriate recording or sharing during the school day
- Enhances students' engagement in lessons, social spaces, and enrichment activities

When will my child's pouch be unlocked?

Pouches will be unlocked when students leave at the end of the day. It is an incredibly quick process so learning time will not be lost. Students will unlock their pouch at a fixed unlocking location and then continue moving towards the school exit whilst taking their

phone out of the pouch. Pouches will then be placed in a basket provided and students will leave school with their phones.

What if my child forgets to unlock their pouch?

Reception will have an unlocking device should students forget to unlock their phone at the end of the day.

What happens if a child takes the pouch home by accident?

Staff will be on duty at the unlocking stations reminding students to put their unlocked pouch in the basket, so this is extremely unlikely to happen. However, if this does occur then the student will be able to return the pouch to main reception before 5pm that same day to unlock their mobile phone from the pouch.

Will the unlocking device be with teachers or outside?

Unlocking stations will be located in both the quad areas on exit routes for students to access at the end of the day.

What if my child needs to leave school during the school day?

Students will be able to unlock their phone on exit via reception.

What if my child currently uses their phone in school for research, taking pictures of final coursework pieces etc?

Learning will not be impacted by the introduction of this policy. Laptops and PCs are readily available in school. Students should upload work to their class Team on Microsoft Teams or email it to themselves.

What if my child currently uses their phone at home for research, homework, editing coursework etc?

Learning will not be impacted by the introduction of this policy. Laptops and PCs are readily available in school. Students should upload work to their class Team on Microsoft Teams or email it to themselves to be able to then access this when they return to school.

Does this only apply to smart phones?

The policy applies to all mobile/portable devices/smart watches.

Does this apply to current Year 11 students?

By the Monday 1st June 2026, Yr11 students will be in their GCSE exam season so will be handing their phones in for exams as part of their normal exam routines. The whole school roll out will be introduced from Monday 29th June so this will be after the completion of the GCSE examinations.

How can you support us?

We kindly ask parents and carers to:

- Discuss the new system with your child to ensure they understand the expectations
- Ensure their phone is stored safely in the pouch each morning
- Contact the school office directly if your child needs to receive an urgent message during the day
- Reiterate to your child that the aim is not to remove technology from young people's lives, but to create a healthy balance where phones do not undermine learning or wellbeing.