



2<sup>nd</sup> July 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

### Important Update: Mobile Phone-Free School from September 2026

At The Victory Academy, we're committed to providing a calm, focused learning environment where all students can Belong and Achieve.

I recently wrote to parents and invited feedback in response to the updated government guidance regarding mobile phones in schools. I want to begin by thanking parents for their considered feedback. The feedback from parents was that they supported a further strengthening of our approach. Alongside this, we gained feedback from staff and students and have used this to shape our approach going forward. We have also made our decisions based on what research and experience is telling us about student learning in schools.

I am now writing to confirm that, in line with the new government guidance which states that schools should be mobile phone-free by default, The Thinking Schools Academy Trust (TSAT) has determined that all schools within the Trust will operate as mobile phone-free environments during the school day, with no use of mobile phones permitted from September 2026. This applies to the entire school day, including before school, break and lunchtime, movement between lessons, clubs, trips and visits, unless directed otherwise by a member of staff. It also includes smartwatches, earbuds and similar devices that allow communication or recording. This expectation applies to all students, including those in Sixth Form.

### What this Means in Practice

- It means that your child does not need a mobile phone of any description during the school day
- We recognise that some parents and carers wish their child to have a phone for safety on the journey to and from school. This is fully understood. However, mobile phones must not be seen, heard or used anywhere on the school site.
- If a phone is brought into school, it must be switched off and securely stored on arrival and must remain inaccessible until the end of the school day.
- As mobile phone-free schools, students bring mobile phones onto site at their own risk. The school cannot accept responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of mobile phones at any time, including when they have been confiscated.

In order to support this aim, **we have made the decision to use mobile phone pouches for all students from September 2026**. Planning for the implementation of this system is already underway and we will be partnering with the organisation 'Phone Locker' who are already operating in a number of schools locally and nationally. We were keen not to 'confiscate' mobile phones from students or create unnecessary 'stand-offs' with teachers in doing so. A lockable phone pouch means students have the security of retaining their phone, with a fast and easy way of accessing them again after the school day. Below I have outlined the policy changes and updated daily routines that will be in place for September. In addition, at the end of my letter, I have provided a set of FAQs provided by TSAT.



ASPIRE, ENDEAVOUR, ACHIEVE thevictoryacademy.org.uk

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE  
We invest in wellbeing

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE  
We invest in people Standard

Headteacher: Mr O Owen BSc (Hons) NPQH  
Chief Executive Officer: Mr S Gardner BA (Hons) MSc NPQH NLE

Magpie Hall Road, Chatham,  
Kent, ME4 5JB

T: 03333 602140  
E: office@thevictoryacademy.org.uk

The Victory Academy is a member of The Thinking Schools Academy Trust, whose registered address is Park Crescent, Chatham, Kent, ME4 6NR. A company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. Company Number: 7359755



## Changes to our Behaviour Policy

The school will supply an **initial pouch** for all students on their first day of school in September. This will then become your child's personal pouch that they are responsible for. If it is lost or broken, parents will need to replace the pouch at a cost of £20.00 and the school will supply a replacement. If your child will not be bringing in a phone to school at all, then there is no reason for your child to have a pouch. Please let us know if this is the case by completing the online form linked below by Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July.

[Confirmation of Mobile Phone Pouch not required – Fill in form.](#)

## Daily Routines – 'Ready to Learn'

- Your child will not need a mobile phone of any description during the school day.
- Upon arrival to the school site, students will be required to turn off, store and lock their mobile phone within the mobile phone pouch provided. **This is students' responsibility.** Once secured, pouches should be placed in a school bag, blazer pocket or locker for the day.
- There will be a 10 minute "Ready to Learn" section as part of Learning Period 1 where pouches will be checked as well as uniform and equipment.
- All students will need to ensure they bring a copy of their printed timetable to school on a daily basis.
- Mobile phone pouches will remain locked throughout the school day including break and lunch times.
- These arrangements will apply to Sixth Form students onsite except when they are in the Sixth Form Centre.
- Students will unlock their mobile phone pouch as they leave school site using the unlocking stations.



## Searching for Devices

There may be occasions where a member of staff is required to conduct a random search of a student's personal belongings for a mobile phone or other banned item, where this is deemed necessary to maintain high standards of behaviour and a safe environment. Any such search will be carried out in accordance with the Department for Education guidance on searching and screening.

## Immediate Confiscation

- Any phone that is seen outside of a pouch during the school day will be confiscated for a period of two school weeks, with no opportunity for collection. The school approach will also include opportunities for education.
- If the two weeks ends during a school holiday, students will receive their phone back on return to school.
- There will be no option for the SIM card to be removed – it will be confiscated and kept with the phone.
- If a student's phone is confiscated twice within a term, it will be returned at the end of the next term.
- If required for safety reasons, the student will be provided with a basic phone for their journey home by the school.

## Related Sanctions

- Any evidence of tampering with a pouch including (but not limited to) the examples listed below, will result in the requirement of a replacement pouch at a cost of £20:
  - Damage or major scuffs to the black ball or button



- Cut/torn/ripped pouch
- Bent/cut pin
- Pouch opening without an unlocking station

If a pouch is accidentally damaged, the student should notify the school immediately, explaining what happened. If any damage is spotted at a pouch check, it is likely to be considered intentional unless the student has reported it.

- Possession of or bringing in a release device will lead to a suspension.
- The use of a “decoy phone” will lead to a period in the Internal Reflection Room and the confiscation of the student’s “real” phone.
- A student refusing to hand over their phone will be taken to the Internal Reflection Room whilst the school seeks the support of the parent/carer in the confiscation of the phone.

### **Communication & Safeguarding**

- If you need to contact your child urgently during the day, please do so via the school office. Messages will be passed on promptly. To support this, we have secured additional office capacity from September.
- If a student needs to contact home, they can do this from Student Services at break or lunch time.
- We appreciate your support in reinforcing this approach, which will help ensure calm, safe and focused learning environment. Attached to this letter are a number of FAQs. If however, you still have any unanswered questions, we ask that you contact us outlining your concerns via email in the first instance.
- There will still be the need for your child to have access to a device at home (there is no reason why this can’t be a laptop/tablet) to access Teams, websites and apps for their Out of Class Learning. If your child does not have access to a device at home, we operate a homework club in the library after school.
- The school has established emergency procedures with which all staff are familiar. In such situations, it is essential that students follow staff instructions at all times. The presence of mobile phones can hinder effective communication and response.
- During school trips, the trip leader will use discretion regarding students needing access to their devices. A small number of hand-held unlocking devices will be made available.

For a lot of our students, being mobile-free will all come as a relief to them, some will struggle, but I want to thank you in anticipation of your support with this initiative.

Your sincerely

Mr O Owen  
**Headteacher**



### **Mobile Phones in School – Parent FAQ**

- 1. Why are TSAT schools introducing this policy?*  
The Department for Education states that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default. This supports better focus and learning, improved behaviour, and reduced distraction and online risks. You can read the full guidance here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools>
- 2. Can my child still bring a phone to school?*  
Yes. We understand that some parents and carers wish their child to have a phone for safety on the journey to and from school. However, phones must be switched off, secured in a school provided pouch and not used at any point on the school site.
- 3. Why can't students use phones at break or lunchtime?*  
The guidance is clear that restrictions should apply throughout the entire school day. This helps encourage social interaction, reduce pastoral issues and online conflict, and ensure consistency and fairness. This isn't just about limiting screen time, it's about giving students the space to think deeply, engage meaningfully, and thrive in an environment designed for their growth.
- 4. How will the school manage phones during the day?*  
Each school will use its own system, such as pouches, lockers or secure storage. Please refer to your school's letter for details of the system used and the daily routine.
- 5. What happens if a phone is seen or used?*  
The phone will be confiscated and sanctions will be applied in line with the school's behaviour policy. Repeat or serious breaches will result in further consequences.
- 6. What if I need to contact my child during the day?*  
Please contact the school office. We will ensure messages are passed on quickly and safely. Students can also request to contact home via staff if needed.
- 7. What if my child needs a phone for medical or exceptional reasons?*  
In a small number of cases, adaptations may be made which could include the provision of an alternative Velcro pouch. Please contact the school directly to discuss this.
- 8. Will phones ever be used for learning?*  
No. Students will be provided with everything they need to learn effectively without a phone.
- 9. What if my child refuses to follow the rules?*  
Schools will follow their behaviour policy to ensure consistency and fairness. This may include further sanctions until expectations are met.
- 10. How can I support this policy?*  
You can help by reinforcing that phones must not be used in school, avoiding contacting your child during the school day, and supporting the school's expectations.