



Guilsborough Academy

Guilsborough Multi Academy Trust

03 July 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

This letter contains two key updates. The first is in relation to a potential third heatwave next week. The second being an update on our response to the introduction of the law on the accessibility of mobile phones in schools.

Uniform for the remainder of the term

Next week is likely to be another very warm and potentially hot week, with temperatures forecast to approach 30 degrees in our area. Given the uniform decision we had already communicated about the activity days, I feel it is prudent to extend the period during which students can wear their PE kit. Given the forecast for next week and the activities which we are offering over the next two weeks, we have taken the decision to allow PE kit for the remainder of the term. This also reduces the number of communications you will receive.

I recognise that this may mean extra pressures at home as some parents are unlikely to have multiple PE tops. The small survey I have completed suggested most students have at least two, but some only have a single top. If there is an issue with washing garments so that students can continue to wear PE kit, a plain blue or white T-shirt may be worn for one day to allow clothing to be washed and dried.

Mobile Phones

I also wish to use this letter to expand on the information already shared in relation to mobile phones from September. As stated previously, the vast majority of parents/carers supported restricting our young people's access to mobile phones while they are at school. Among those who did not support this, there were comments regarding their wish that their child be able to contact them at any time of their choosing. While this may be a parents/carer's preference, we must recognise that we have over 100 adults on site every day who are responsible for the well-being and safety of all our students. Where there is a need, we have facilitated conversations between our young people and their parents/carers. We will always support our young people who are struggling but must also make decisions as to the 'need' to contact home on each occasion. On a weekly basis we have to manage parents/carers arriving at school to collect their children when they have been called by them to ask to go home. This is not something which should happen.

A number of replies to our survey also suggested our young people need access to their mobile phones for mental health reasons. While I have no doubt that there may be a very small number of specific cases, the research is clear that mobile phones, and importantly the associated content accessed through them is damaging for our young people's mental health.

The comments we received were overwhelmingly supportive of the introduction of a process to restrict access to mobile phones during the school day. It is important, and I cannot stress just how important, it is to recognise that there will be exceptions for those who require their mobile device for their physical well-being. As an example, we have young people who have their blood sugar monitored continuously via their device, and this must continue. A number of parents/carers commented on potential conflicts with the school setting homework and activities using digital resources. No conflict exists here as the homework is designed to be accessed at home. We are also considering how we provide resources

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for those studying Media as students often need access to filming equipment and modern phones are often better than many 'cameras'.

Whatever is decided is not going to be met with universal approval. However, doing nothing is not an option. As one parent who wrote to me put it, *"I think that you should be very clear in all comms that this is a legal requirement, and if you don't do anything, you will be penalised by OFSTED were there to be an inspection which would impact on the school as a whole and future intakes."* While I have never acted for the purpose of Ofsted, and will only take decisions for the benefit of our young people, the fact that Ofsted have been asked to check on how schools are responding to this law places a greater scrutiny on it.

In general, mobile devices are not needed during the school day and while asking our young people to not have them visible and not use them has been relatively successful, we still see too many incidents of them being used during the day. This is often in the toilets or changing rooms and has resulted in issues which need to be resolved. We must also recognise that the new law states clearly that phones should not be accessible. I have copied below a link to case studies which are available for schools to review.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/creating-a-mobile-phone-free-environment-school-case-studies>

Given the range of options available, and the viability of managing the options in school, we must adopt an approach that is going to be effective and also have the least impact on day-to-day operations, including limiting lost time.

Therefore, the Academy will be introducing phone pouches from September. For those who wish to bring a mobile phone to school, it will be our expectation that the phone will be placed into a phone pouch during the first part of morning registration and then locked. This will be observed by form tutors to ensure our young people are placing their phones into the pouch. The vast majority, 78%, also supported the idea of passing on the cost of this to our parents / carers. Unfortunately, the introduction of this law, without additional funding to support schools, means passing on the cost is inevitable. However, we will ensure that refunds are provided at the end of a young person's time with us, as long as the pouch is returned. We will be working with companies to secure the very best price for our community. There will inevitably be costs the Academy will need to cover including the fixed and portable unlocking stations. There needs to be sufficient stations to allow for all students to unlock their pouches in a calm and orderly manner.

Of course, if students do not bring a phone to school, they will not need to have a pouch. I do understand that this will not be an option for many, and I recognise the impact of this policy on parents / carers.

We are currently working with UKPhonepouches.com to ensure that our processes will not create bottlenecks when students are leaving the site. To facilitate a productive start to the day, we will be starting our tutor time with a phone check and we are speaking to the Local Authority and School Transport to ensure our bus services arrive on time. Our first of the day bell rings at 8:35am to signal to students that they should start travelling to their form rooms in order to be present, in classrooms, for the beginning of the session at 8:45am. I respectfully remind parents/carers who drop off their children to do so by 8:35am.

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It is unlikely that everything will be in place for a September launch and we will update you when we have further details. We have a meeting arranged with the company for next week and they have already suggested they make direct purchase available for parents/carers to reduce the administrative burden on schools. They also offer a 36 month price-lock guarantee for those occasions where replacements have to be sought.

I understand that this approach will not be to everyone's liking. However, we do not have a choice and must take appropriate action to make mobile phones inaccessible during the day. I will update you when I have further significant information to share. It will also include our behaviour policy which will contain information on mobile phones.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Frazer', written over a horizontal line.

Mr S Frazer
Principal

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