

huSH at Thistley Hough Academy

From September 2026, Thistley Hough Academy aims to become a phone-free learning environment with the introduction of hush mobile phone pouches for all students.

Learn more about *huSH* pouches below:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is a *huSH* pouch?

- The *huSH* Pouch is a secure bag that is used to store an individual's mobile device or devices. 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.

How will students receive a *huSH* pouch?

- In September 2026, all students in Years 7-11 will be assigned a *huSH* pouch to secure their phone and/or smartwatch. The pouch is the property of the school and is considered on loan to the student during the school year. Students are responsible for the *huSH* pouch at all times and for bringing the pouch to and from school each day and keeping them in good condition.

How will the process work at arrival and dismissal?

- Upon entering school, students will turn their phone off, place the phone inside of 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 building.

How is the "end of the day" defined?

- The end of the day is 2:45pm. Students who leave school before 2:45pm will be able to unlock their phones as they leave via the main reception.

How will queues be managed at unlocking stations?

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

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

- Staff will remind students to unlock their devices before exiting. If forgotten, the device will remain locked until the following morning.

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 their Head of Year or the school office.

Will students needing to catch the bus get priority?

- Adequate unlocking stations will ensure all students, including those catching buses, leave on time.

What if a student needs to unlock their pouch for an appointment (e.g. visiting the dentist) during the day?

- Unlocking stations are available at the school office and reception for such instances.

What will the process be for students who attend extra-curricular classes / intervention after school?

- Students who attend extra-curricular classes / intervention after school will be able to unlock their devices when they leave school.

Will students' phones be safe?

- Phones never leave the possession of the students.

Will a student still be able to listen to music?

- No, the *huSH* pouch blocks signal. All Bluetooth devices, including AirPods, smartwatches and other headphones, must be stored in the *huSH* pouch.

What if a student needs to leave the building before regular dismissal?

- If a student needs to leave school early for an approved early dismissal, i.e. a medical appointment, they will be able to unlock their devices at school just prior to their departure. If returning to school during the instructional day, the *huSH* pouch would be locked upon re-entry to the building.

What if a parent or carer needs to reach their child during the school day?

- We understand that emergencies will occur. Parents may contact the main office at 01782 883500 to speak with their child if the need arises. Alternatively, you can email the school office at enquiries@thistleyhoughacademy.org.uk or via your child's Head of Year.

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

- Students needing to contact their parents urgently should do so through their Head of Year or the school reception. This approach ensures that communication is managed efficiently and in alignment with school policies and that staff can offer appropriate support or guidance.

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. Schools will communicate with parents/carers through Arbor please ensure contact details are up to date via the app.

What happens if a student misuses or refuses to use the pouch?

- Such behaviour will be treated as defiance and managed according to the Academy Behaviour Policy.

Will there be searches to ensure compliance?

- Regular spot checks will be conducted by staff to maintain consistent use of the pouches.

What if staff suspect a student has a device that is not secured in their locked pouch?

- If staff reasonably suspect that a student is carrying a device outside of their locked pouch, a search will be conducted in accordance with school policy. If a device is discovered, consequences will be applied in line with our Behaviour Policy. These measures are essential for maintaining a fair and respectful environment for everyone.

What if a student does not comply or damages the locked case to access their phone?

- Students who are found to unlock the pouches, cause damage to the pouch, or use an alternate phone will be subject to consequences in line with the school behaviour policy. There will also be a replacement cost to families of £12 to be paid via Arbor Pay.

What happens if a student doesn't have their huSH Pouch?

- Mobile Phones will be expected to be handed over to staff and secured in the school safe until the end of the school day. At the end of the school day, students will be able to unlock their hush pouches at a number of various points around the Academy.

What if a student needs their personal device for a medical issue?

- Students who have a documented medical condition and who need a personal device for monitoring their condition will be provided with a non-locking *huSH* pouch that has a Velcro seal. For example, students with diabetes and use their mobile phone device to monitor their blood sugars.

How will students be able to contact families if there is a lockdown situation?

- As part of our commitment to student and staff safety, all schools carry out lockdown drills twice a year. These are a vital part of our emergency preparedness procedures. During a lockdown, students and staff are required to remain silent and follow instructions to ensure everyone's safety.

Please note the following important guidance for parents:

- The school will communicate with parents directly via the Arbor App.
- Please do not call the school during a lockdown — phone lines need to remain clear for emergency communication, and reception staff may not be available to answer.

Please do not come to the school site. This could interfere with our safety procedures and place both students and families at increased risk.

Why can't the school just implement a zero-tolerance policy and allow students to keep their phones put away?

- The school introduced the phones-out-of-sight rule to limit phone use during the school day. However, enforcing this has often fallen to classroom teachers, taking time away from learning.
- Feedback from parents, students, and staff supports tighter restrictions on mobile phone use. We are therefore reviewing our approach to reduce distractions and protect learning time.

Requiring students to lock their phones away seems like a punishment for students. Is this the case?

- The introduction of *huSH* is not a punitive measure. The intention of *huSH* is three-fold:
 - to create classroom environments where teachers can teach and students can learn free from distractions caused by the personal use of devices;
 - to reduce the negative impacts for ALL students of inappropriate use of devices at school, such as cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and incidents involving mobile phones that detract from a healthy school climate; and
 - to increase meaningful face-to-face connections between students.

How much does a *huSH* Pouch replacement cost?

- The school will provide your child with their first *huSH* pouch free of charge. If the pouch is lost or deliberately damaged, a £12 replacement fee will apply.

If a student forgets to unlock the pouch before leaving the building, is there a way for students to unlock the pouch – i.e. an unlock station outside the school building?

- There will not be an unlocking station outside the building. If the student forgets to unlock their pouch, they will be able to return to school before 6:00pm to unlock it.

What if there is a building-wide emergency and students are unable to return to the building, how will they open their *huSH* pouch?

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

If the huSH pouch is stolen/lost who is responsible for replacement?

- Students will ultimately be responsible for the care of their *huSH* pouch. If a student intentionally damages the pouch, they will be responsible for replacement and will face consequences in line with the Academy's Behaviour Policy. If a student loses their pouch, the Academy will consider replacing the pouch free of charge in the first instance only. Replacement costs will incur for any subsequent losses.

How many huSH stations will there be and where will they be located?

- Staff from *huSH* have visited the school to determine the most appropriate locations in the school for the unlocking devices. Safety, efficiency and effectiveness will be top priorities in locating the unlocking devices.

Do the huSH pouches block phone signals or internet?

- Yes, *huSH* pouches do block mobile phone signals and the internet.

How will students know whose huSH pouch is whose?

- When the school year begins, the pouches will be distributed, and each student will be required to put their name on their pouch as it is handed to them. Students will keep their pouches with them at all times.

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

- Yes. Students will continue to have access to school laptops and computers as part of their learning. We recognise that technology is a powerful and effective tool to enhance education, and we remain committed to supporting students in using it responsibly to achieve their full academic potential.