



SOS in plain English

What it is, how it works, and what makes it different

- For families, friends and anyone curious
- September 2026

In one sentence

SOS turns a student's phone into a school phone while class is in session, then gives it back as a private phone the moment the session ends.

SOS is short for Scholastic Operating System. The company's motto is: **School during class, private after the bell.** ¹³

The problem it solves

Phones pull attention away from lessons. In a survey taken in the fall of 2023, 72% of high school teachers in the United States said students being distracted by phones is a major problem in their classroom. ¹

So the rules are changing. A study published in July 2026 found that 42 of the 50 states plus Washington, D.C. had a statewide law or policy limiting phones in public schools. ² Around the world, 114 school systems had a national rule by March 2026. That is 58% of countries, up from 24% in 2023. ³

Many schools enforce the rule with a cloth pouch that locks with a magnet, or with lockers and cabinets. New York and New Jersey are paying schools to buy that kind of storage. ^{7, 8} One Texas school buying group lists the best-known pouch at \$30.00 per student, or \$27.00 with its discount, and \$31.05 per student for a 500-student school's first year. ⁴

Pouches have a weak spot. A San Francisco middle school stopped using them because they were expensive and students figured out how to unlock them. ⁵ A middle school in Folsom, California dropped them after one year. One of its students said students could open them and damage them to get to their phones. ⁶

What SOS does

SOS does not take the phone away. It changes what the phone can do while school is in session.¹³

- **When a school session starts**, the phone goes into School Mode. Social apps and games pause. Learning apps keep working.¹³
- **When the session ends**, School Mode ends with it. The phone is a private phone again. Nobody collects anything and nobody hands anything back.¹³
- **A parent says yes first**. On an iPhone, Apple's own rules require a parent or guardian to approve before an app like this can manage a child's phone.¹² Parent consent is built into the SOS enrollment steps.^{13, 14}
- **The school sees one screen**. It shows which phones are enrolled, whether each one is in School Mode, and a trust score from 0 to 100.¹³

Before school

Private phone. Everything works as normal.

School session

School Mode. Social apps and games pause. Learning apps work.

After the bell

Private phone again, on its own.

The school sets the session times and any exceptions.¹⁴

How it works, in three parts

The company describes three ideas that make the system work.¹³

- **The rule lives on the phone, not on the school Wi-Fi**. A school gateway or a teacher places an enrolled phone into a session. The rule then travels with the phone. If a student switches to cellular data, a hotspot or a VPN, the session stays on, and the switch is written down as a bypass attempt.
- **A trust score**. The system checks several signals at once, such as the network address, the device's own attestation and the school gateway. It gives each phone a score from 0 to 100 and sorts it as Verified, Trusted, Suspicious or Restricted.
- **Knowing a phone is at school without tracking it**. The phone proves it is at school by matching its network address to the school's network. Off campus, no address leaves the phone at all. The school learns "on our network or not", never where a student goes.

Under the hood, SOS uses tools Apple and Google built into the phones: Apple's Family Controls on iPhone, and Android's built-in work profile.^{10, 12, 13}

What makes it different

- **Nothing to buy, lose or break.** No pouches, lockers or magnets. SOS is software on the phone plus a website for the school.¹³
- **It ends on its own.** The phone is private again at the end of the session, with no line at the door.¹³
- **It leaves private life alone.** The company lists what the system collects: the device ID, the current mode, whether the device matches policy, the time of each mode change, the names of blocked sites, and whether the phone is on campus. It lists what it never collects: messages, photos, personal files, browsing history, social media data, location, keystrokes and screenshots. In Personal Mode it collects nothing at all.¹³
- **It keeps a record.** Each change of mode is saved with a time stamp, and the school can see it.^{13, 14}
- **Families stay in charge.** A child's own phone is enrolled only with the parent's consent.^{12, 13}
- **It matches the direction of the new laws.** New York now requires public schools to keep phones away from the first bell to the last, and says a backpack does not count as storage.⁷ New Jersey requires every public school district to have a bell-to-bell policy from the 2026-2027 school year.⁸ SOS does not certify that a school meets any law, and it does not replace a storage rule that a law requires.¹⁴

What SOS does not do

Being honest about limits is part of the design. Here is what SOS does not claim.

- **It does not read texts, emails or photos.** Those are outside what the system collects.^{13, 14}
- **It cannot lock an iPhone completely.** Apple's tools let an app cover chosen apps and websites on a schedule. Apple's engineers say the tools cannot lock or unlock the phone itself.⁹
- **On a personal Android phone, the owner can remove the work profile that holds the school rules.** Google says so.¹⁰ SOS is built to notice the removal and record it, not to stop it.¹⁴
- **The app is never hidden.** Google requires an app of this kind to show a notice on the phone the whole time it runs, with its own clear icon.¹¹
- **It does not replace teachers, school rules or emergency plans.** The school keeps its own way to handle exceptions and to reach students in an emergency.¹⁴
- **It has not been used in a school yet.** There are no customers and no completed product tests. Nobody has measured whether it changes grades, attention or behavior.¹⁴

Who makes it, and where it stands today

- Scholastic OS has three owners. Shane Giordano leads development and marketing.¹⁴
 - The core system, with its dashboard, sessions, rules, enrollment, consent, communications and analytics, was built with Claude Code using the Claude Opus 4.8 AI model, with no human programmers.¹⁴
 - The iPhone and Android apps come next, built with the Claude Fable 5.1 model. People test the finished apps at the end of development.¹⁴
 - The company's website calls the current system a working version that can be shown live.¹³ The business plans call it a prototype, with the phone apps, real-device testing and outside checks still ahead.¹⁴
 - The plan is a 90-day trial at one school, district or town department. The target start is January 2027. It begins with 10 to 25 approved devices and grows to 50 after two stable weeks. A written plan to stop and release every device is agreed before day one.¹⁴
 - Personal phones need the family's permission and their own round of testing before they join.¹⁴
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Words to know

App A small program on a phone. SOS is one app among the others on the phone.	School Mode The state of the phone during a school session. Social apps and games pause. Learning apps work.
Personal Mode The state of the phone outside a session. It is a normal private phone.	Bell to bell From the first bell of the day to the last one. Many new laws use these words.
Pouch A cloth bag with a magnet lock that some schools use to hold phones during the day.	Dashboard The screen the school looks at. It shows which phones are enrolled and which are in School Mode.
Trust score A number from 0 to 100 that says how sure the system is that a phone is following the rules.	Parental consent The parent's yes. A child's own phone is not enrolled without it.

Hotspot and VPN

Two ways a phone can get online without the school Wi-Fi. SOS keeps the session on either way.

Pilot

A small, careful first trial with one school, measured and written up before anyone decides to go bigger.

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