



Yondr Phone Locking Pouches

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is only OSCA doing this?

OSCA is not acting alone. This move is part of a much wider shift across the Ormiston Academies Trust, across Sandwell, and nationally under new government guidance. Here's what parents need to know:

1. All Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT) schools are moving towards being phone-free. The Trust's Chief Executive has been clear that smartphones are having a negative impact on learning, mental health and wellbeing, which is why all OAT schools, including OSCA, are moving in this direction

2. This aligns with the UK Government's new national policy direction. In early 2026, the Department for Education updated its national guidance strongly encouraging all schools in England to prohibit mobile phone use throughout the school day. Schools and trusts have been asked to adopt this guidance from April 2026. This means OSCA is following national expectations, not acting in isolation. The government's reasoning is clear: reducing distraction, improving behaviour, enhancing safety, and supporting children's wellbeing.

3. Sandwell schools are also going phone-free. Locally, schools across Sandwell are adopting phone-free policies in response to the same national direction and the concerns shared by families and educators across the area.

4. Why use pouches? Phone-locking pouches are a simple, reliable way to ensure:

- Students keep their phone with them, but locked away
- Teachers don't need to spend valuable lesson time policing phone use
- The policy is fair, consistent, and easy to enforce across the school day

How quick is the unlocking process?

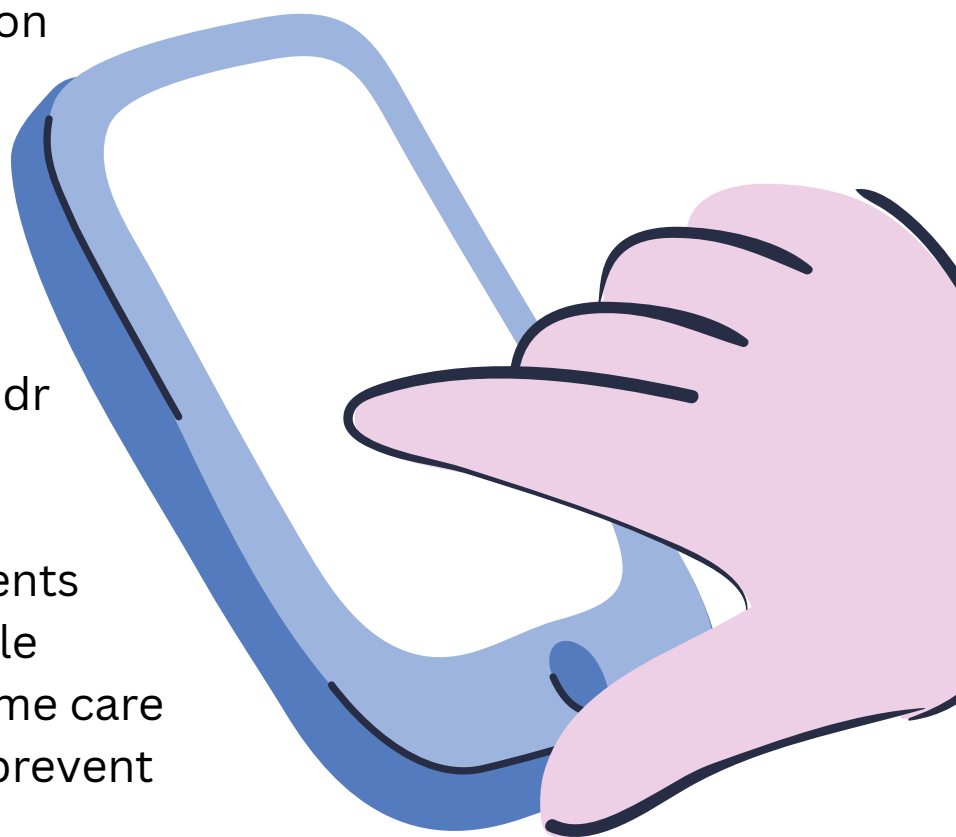
There are several unlocking stations on the path on the way out of school that students can use. The unlocking process is quick and students typically don't need to break stride. While students are still getting used to how to unlock pouches, staff will be on hand with mobile unlocking stations to support in the first few weeks. If needed we will add extra unlocking points.

What if my child arrives late or leaves early?

The main reception will have an unlocking device for students who need to leave early. For students who arrive late there will be staff available in the late room ensuring that their pouch is correctly closed up safely.

Will my child's phone be safe?

Students are in possession of their phone - in their Yondr pouch - for the entire school day. We will advise students to store the pouch safely in their bags. While the Yondr pouch will provide some protection, it's not a protective case, so students should continue to handle their phones with the same care they normally would to prevent damage.



What if my child needs their phone for medical reasons?

We have an alternative solution for the small number of students who require their phones for medical reasons (e.g. diabetes). We will be in touch with these families if they have informed us of their medical condition.

My child currently doesn't bring a phone to school, how will this work for them?

Please send an email to their head of year and we will discuss next steps.



What if there is a school emergency?

In an emergency, the priority is for students to follow school safety procedures under staff guidance. Unauthorised phone use during such situations may:

- Delay emergency responses
- Spread misinformation
- Put students and staff at increased risk
- Disrupt coordinated safeguarding measures

Emergency communications will be managed through the school.

Please see our leaflet on lockdowns for further information.

What if my child wants to contact home?

If your child needs to contact home then they can see their pastoral lead out of lesson time and speak to them who can make contact. They can also go to student reception at break or lunchtime.

If they need to call home as they are unwell this will be done through first aid. If your child tells their teacher they are unwell, the teacher will ask for first aid to attend who will assess and contact home.

What happens if a pouch fails – how does my child get phone access for walking home?

Yondr have not reported any instances where a pouch has failed to release a phone. However, if a pouch fails, see a member of staff who will be able to help getting the phone out.

How will the pouches be funded?

The pouches are funded by us, however there is a fee for a lost or damaged pouch of £25.

Pouches will be returned to the school when a child leaves OSCA.

For students who go to afterschool club, when would their phone pouch be unlocked?

A student attending afterschool club can either unlock their pouch at the end of the school day as normal or after the club.

What about children who feel anxious without a phone?

We understand that some students may feel anxious without access to their phones, particularly if they rely on them for reassurance or regular communication with family. We also recognise that many young people struggle with phone dependency or “phone addiction,” which can make separation feel difficult at first. To support all students, we have the following measures in place:

- **A supportive pastoral team available throughout the day.** Students can speak to a member of our pastoral or safeguarding team at any point if they feel worried, overwhelmed, or need reassurance. Staff are visible and approachable during transitions and social times.
- **Safe, calm spaces for regulation.** If a student feels anxious, they can go to a designated pastoral room to take a moment, talk to an adult, and regulate their emotions before returning to learning.
- **Communication with families when genuinely needed.** If your child needs to contact home then they can see their pastoral lead out of lesson time and speak to them who can make contact. They can also go to student reception at break or lunchtime.
- **Personalised support for anxiety or additional needs.** For students with higher levels of anxiety, we can create an individualised support plan that may include mentoring, safe-adult check-ins, emotional regulation strategies, or timetable adjustments.

- **Support for young people experiencing phone dependency.** We know some students may find it genuinely challenging to be without their phones due to habits formed around constant notifications, social media engagement, or fear of missing out (FOMO). To help with this:

1 We can work with families to understand patterns of use at home and create consistent expectations across school and home.

2 We can offer wellbeing sessions or targeted interventions for students who struggle significantly, helping them build coping strategies and reduce reliance on their devices in a supportive way.

3 Building resilience and independence through our pastoral curriculum, tutor programme, and wellbeing education, we teach strategies for emotional regulation, mindfulness, and managing digital life in a healthy way. We want students to feel confident and secure without needing constant access to a phone.

What if the Yondr pouch gets damaged?

If accidental damage occurs, students must report it immediately. If damage is discovered during checks and has not been reported, it may be considered intentional. Students will be provided guidelines to lock their pouch when they leave school to avoid any accidental damage.

The pouch should not be used as a replacement for a protective case and/or screen protector on a mobile device.

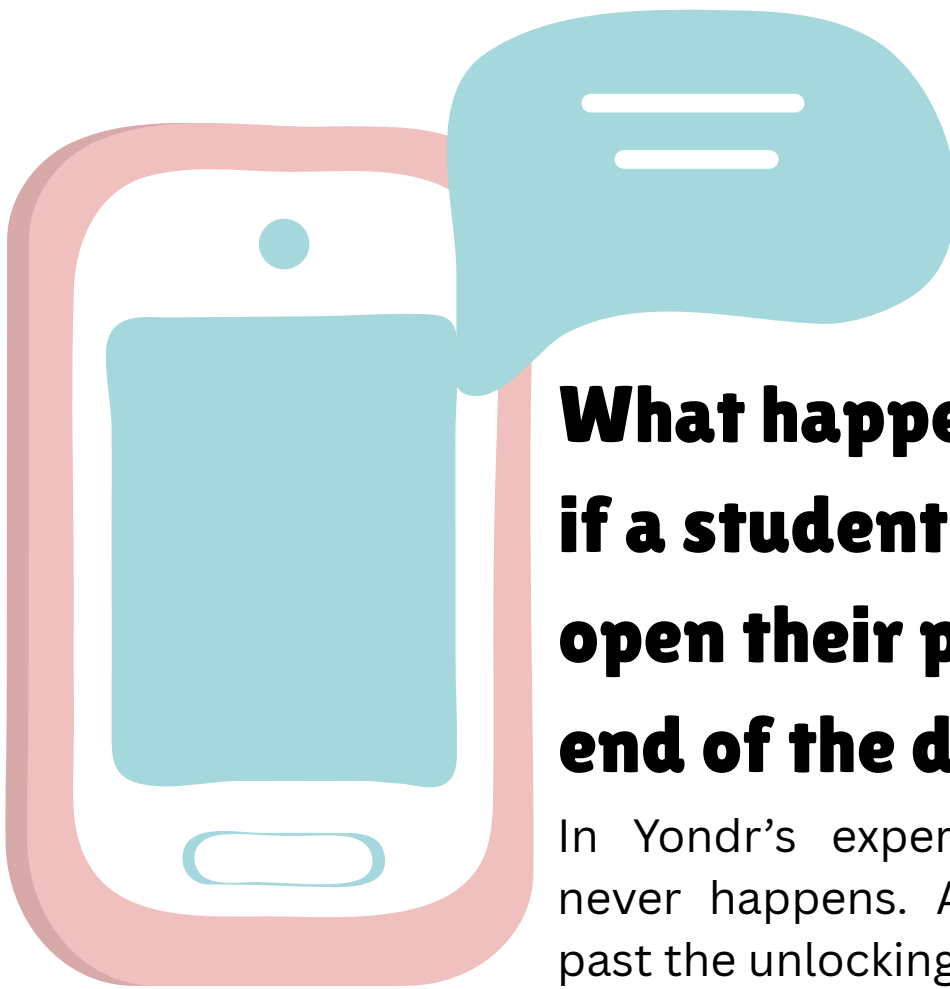
The pouches are very robust, but if a student damaged the pouch, they would be held responsible for damaging school property, so parents will be required to purchase a replacement pouch. The replacement cost will be £25 per pouch and is subject to change.

Examples of damage include:

- Ripped fabric
- Cut
- Torn
- Bent/Cut pin
- Burning the pouch
- Signs of force to black button on flap
- Damage to the black ball

Damage to school property will result in a suspension as per behaviour policy.

If a student is found in possession of an unlocking magnet, or a similar strength magnet used to unlock the pouches, this will be considered a serious offence, and it will be dealt with in line with the academies behaviour policy.



What happens if a student forgets to open their pouch at the end of the day?

In Yondr's experience, this almost never happens. All students funnel past the unlocking stations at the exit

through the basketball courts and they typically want their phones back. If they do arrive home with a phone in a pouch, they can either come back to school to unlock it, or have a phone free evening!

What happens if a student forgets to bring in their pouch?

The student's phone will be collected and securely stored in the school office until the end of the day. Parents/ carers will be contacted and reminded of the procedures. If the pouch is repeatedly forgotten their pouch will be treated as lost and a replacement fee of £25 will be charged. We suggest that students leave the pouches in their school bags and pouches must stay in the locked position when not at school.

What happens if a phone is seen outside of a pouch?

It is important for all students to follow the mobile phone policy. However, if a phone is seen during the school day then the following sanctions will occur.



First breach

- Phone is confiscated and secured in school safe.
- Logged on school system and same day 20-minute detention issued.



Further breaches

- Phone is confiscated and secured in school safe.
- Student placed in reflection room.
- Fixed term suspension for further breaches.
- Temporary phone ban.

Any noncompliance at any stage may result in escalation through the behaviour policy.

Bag searches may be conducted if staff have concerns that a student has a mobile phone on them that hasn't been placed into their pouch.

Does the school expect students to use their phones to support research during lessons?

No we do not expect students to use phones to support research in lessons.

I don't agree with this policy of going phone free.

OSCA will be phone-free because every Ormiston Academies Trust school is required to remove phone use during the day due to their clear negative impact on learning and mental health. This is backed by new national government guidance telling all schools to prohibit phones from April 2026. All Sandwell schools are moving to the same approach.

This policy is not optional and must be followed. We can still discuss any specific concerns you have, but the rule applies to all students.

