

Dear Families,

Next academic year we will be making our school a phone-free space to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our students, their engagement in learning and to support our pastoral teams.

We plan to use a system called Yondr to do this. As you will have seen in the letter sent out on Friday 4th July, over 50 schools in RBWM have signed up to remove access to mobile phones during the day by the end of 2025 and several schools have already implemented similar pouch systems in their settings.

We understand that phones are an important part of today's society but feel that they add additional pressure to young people when they are accessible during the school day. We believe that having a complete break from their phones between 8.40am and 3.10pm will have a positive impact on their wellbeing, as well as increased engagement in their learning.

The Yondr system utilises a simple, secure pouch that stores a phone that **we will be asking parents to purchase for £18 in September**. This is a one-off cost and will be added to our 'uniform' list for new students going forwards. Students in receipt of pupil premium funding will have their pouch purchased for them. If any family feels they will struggle to pay for a pouch they should contact the Finance office at: **Finance@altwoodschool.co.uk**

Every student will secure their phone in their pouch when they arrive at school. Students will keep possession of their phones but will not be able to use them until their pouches are opened at the end of the school day. Students are required to bring their pouch to and from school each day and are responsible for it at all times. If a student forgets their pouch, they will need to hand their phone into reception and collect it at the end of the day.

Sixth Form students will be able to use their pouches when they want to study or may be asked to use them whilst in lessons. They will, however, have access to their own unlocking station in the sixth form centre and so will be able to take responsibility for the pouch use themselves.

Any student with medical conditions that requires use of their phone to check levels during the day will be issued with a specific pouch that enables them to do this.

Yondr recently surveyed over 900 school partners to measure the effects of creating phone-free educational environments. These schools achieved notable progress in multiple areas:

- **65% of schools saw an improvement in academic performance**
- **74% of schools saw an improvement in student behaviour**
- **83% of schools saw an improvement in student engagement in the classroom**
- **86% of schools saw a positive impact on student safety and wellness**



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school directly at altwood@altwoodschoo.co.uk

If there is an emergency and you would like to get in contact with your child, please reach out to the School Office at 01628 622236. This is no change to our current system.

We would very much appreciate your full support in the adoption of the Yondr pouches at our school next term. **We expect the system to be operational by October Half Term** and will be running assemblies and sending out more information from September.

Best wishes

Cath Harden
Headteacher

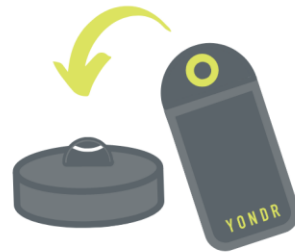
How Yondr Works



As students enter school, they place their phone in their assigned Yondr Pouch.



Students close and secure their Pouch, keeping it on them throughout the day.



When leaving school, students tap their Pouch on a Base to retrieve their phone.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I want to reach my child during the school day?

We want our students to be engaged in their learning. If you need to contact your child during the school day, contact the main office at 01628 622236.

What if there is a school emergency?

In case of a school emergency, we direct our students to safety first, following our school emergency preparedness protocol.



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 backpacks.

What if the student is caught on their phone or they deliberately damage their pouch?

If a student damages their pouch or is caught on their phone, we will collect the phone/pouch and call home:

- The Parent will be asked to come to the school and pick up their child's phone
- The student will be issued with an SLT detention.

(Damaged pouches will be billed to parents at a reduced cost of £15)

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 exits; they want their phones back and don't forget to unlock their pouches. 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!

How quick is the unlocking process?

The unlocking process is quick and takes under a second per student. While students are still getting used to how to unlock pouches, additional mobile unlocking stations will be available to stop queues forming in the first few weeks. If needed, we will add extra unlocking points.

