

June 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

Phone-Free with Yondr. 'Focus Without Phones'

At Ormiston Forge Academy we're committed to creating a learning environment where every student can thrive. Our young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many exciting opportunities – but also academic, emotional and social challenges. Beginning September 2026, we will launch the [Yondr Phone-Free Schools Programme](#). This isn't just about limiting screen time, it's about giving students the space to think deeply, engage meaningfully, and thrive in an environment designed for their growth.

For over a decade, Yondr has supported schools in more than 40 countries to build healthier, more engaging school cultures. Their pouch-based programme, combined with hands-on guidance and dedicated support, has led to powerful results:

- 86% reported improved safety and student wellness
- 84% saw increased engagement in class
- 44% reduced behavioral referrals

How the Programme Works

Each student will be assigned a Yondr pouch—a secure, lockable case for storing personal devices. Students are responsible for bringing their pouch to and from school each day and keeping it in good condition.

- **Upon arrival:** Students power off all smart technology including their mobile phones, and place devices in the pouch, locking it in front of a member of staff.
- **During the day:** Students keep the locked pouch in their backpack/bags.
- **At dismissal:** Students unlock pouches at designated stations to retrieve their devices.

This process is quick, simple, and will be supervised by staff as part of our daily routine.

Staying Connected

With student safety as our top priority, we will follow our standard safety protocols in the event of an emergency. If you need to reach your child during the school day, please contact our main office on 01384 566 598 or email info@oatforge.co.uk.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to create a focused, present, and positive school environment for every student.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Mason

Dr L Mason
Principal



Frequently Asked Questions

Morning and Afternoon Procedures

How quick is the unlocking process?

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 stop queues forming in the first few weeks. If needed we will add extra unlocking points.

What if my child arrives late or needs to be dismissed early?

The main office will have an unlocking device for students to monitor students arriving late or leaving early.

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. 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 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 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 £10 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.

Daily Pouch Use

What if my child needs their phone for medical reasons?

We have an alternative solution for the small number of students who require access to their phones for recognised medical reasons (e.g. diabetes). This provision applies where the need is supported by appropriate evidence from a medical professional. We will contact families directly where the school has been informed of such medical needs

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

Please send an email to info@oatforge.co.uk and we will discuss next steps.

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

If a student is found in possession of a phone **outside their pouch** on school site, the phone will be confiscated and returned only when a parent/guardian picks it up from the school site. Sanctions will be applied in line with our 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.

What if the Yondr pouch gets damaged?

Any attempt to tamper with the Yondr system, including use or possession of high-strength magnets will be treated as a serious offence, potentially resulting in a replacement fee of £10, confiscation of their device until collected by a parent and/or internal/external suspension.



[OAT]

ORMISTON ACADEMIES TRUST
AN OAT ACADEMY

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 given advice 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.

We will be conducting random pouch/spot checks over the full academic year to assess the condition of pouches.

Emergencies

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.



National
Tutoring
Programme



[OAT]

ORMISTON ACADEMIES TRUST
AN OAT ACADEMY