

Ormiston Rivers Academy

Mobile Device Management Policy

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1. Policy Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure clarity on the academy's process around mobile devices including mobile phones. It outlines the procedures that will be undertaken by the academy and the expectations of students in terms of mobile device management.

The policy aims to ensure students are able to learn in a distraction free environment that allows their focus to be on their lessons and building knowledge in their subjects.

2. Impact of Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are increasingly being used by students both when at school and at home. However, a significant amount of research, including guidance from the Department for Education, clearly shows the negative impact this can have on student learning, behaviour, and wellbeing. Research tells us the following:

i. Impact of mobile phones on learning:

1. The presence of a smart phone affects attention and concentration, impacting learning and recall of knowledge.
2. It can take up to 20 minutes for students to refocus on what they were learning after receiving a notification on their device.
3. Young people exposed to more than 2 hours of screen time on smart phones per day have worse working memory, processing speed, attention levels, language skills and executive function compared to those who do not.

ii. Impact of mobile phones on mental health & wellbeing:

1. Research shows there has been an increase in major depression (145% in girls / 161% in boys) since 2010 when smart phones were introduced.
2. Rates of self-harm have tripled, and rates of suicide have increased by 91% in boys and 167% in girls since 2010.
3. There has been a 52% increase in screen time between 2020 and 2022, with 25% of young people using mobile phones in a way that is consistent with behavioural addiction, for example, finding it difficult to control the amount of time spent on the phone and using the phone to the detriment of other enjoyable activities.

We have a duty to create a learning environment which is calm, safe and free from distraction so all students, whatever their background, can learn and thrive. As such, moving forward it is the intention of Ormiston Rivers Academy to support our students to ensure that mobile devices are not to be seen, used or heard at Ormiston Rivers Academy.

To achieve this, every student in years 7-11 is assigned a **personal Focus Pouch**. It is each student's responsibility to bring their pouch with them to school every day and keep it in good working condition.

4. Parents / Carers Responsibilities

- Parents should take the time to familiarise themselves with the school's behaviour, and mobile device management policies, including any changes or updates that may occur.
- Parents should ensure that their children are prepared for school, including making sure they have their Focus Pouch with them.
- Parents should encourage their children to respect the academy expectation that mobile phones are not used, seen or heard and see this expectation as necessary for a well-functioning learning environment.
- Parents should maintain open communication with teachers and pastoral staff to stay informed about and any issues related to their child's meeting of expectations contained in this policy.
- If the school informs parents about an incident of mobile phone misuse, parents / carers are requested to follow up with appropriate discussions at home to reinforce the importance of meeting academy expectations. The mobile phone misuse pathway will be followed and parents are requested to support the academy in upholding the phone ban issued.

5. Daily Pouching Procedure

When students enter the school their phone needs to be turned off and out of sight. At morning line up time every student will need to place their phone inside the pouch. Most students will do this at line-up. Year 11 will do this at the start of tutor time in their class. Students who arrive late to school will do this before they enter the school either at late check-in or in the reception.

1. Students will line up as normal.
2. Phones will be switched off and placed in the Focus Pouch.
3. Pouches will be sealed at line up.
4. Students will hold their pouches up to show staff the pouch has been closed.
5. Form Tutors will undertake a visual check.
(SSAs, HOYs or SLT can perform spot checks at this stage)
6. Any issues will be followed up immediately by the SSA team. The mobile phone misuse pathway (see section 10) will be followed for students who fail to comply.

Students keep their pouches (with their phone locked inside) with them throughout the day, and will then unlock them on the way out of school at one of the unlocking stations.

6. Wet Line Up Pouching Procedure

Year 7 will complete the normal line up procedure in the Gym

Year 8 will complete the normal line up procedure in the Canteen

Year 9 will complete the normal line up procedure in the Sports Hall

Year 10 and 11 will enter the building without lining up. On entry to Form Room.

1. Students will stand behind desks and will remove their Focus Pouch and mobile device
2. Teacher will ask students to switch off mobile device.
3. Students to place the mobile device into the pouch and lock the pouch
4. When complete, the locked pouch is to be placed on the table in-front of the student so that a visual check can be completed by the teacher.

7. Medical Pouches

The only exception to this rule is for students who have been given permission by the DSL to use their phone for medical purposes, e.g. to check insulin levels. Students with permission to use their mobile device for medical purposes will be given a Focus Medical Pouch which is secured by Velcro rather than locked, enabling the student to access their phone when needed.

8. Contacting parents during the school day

If a student believes that they need to make an emergency call, they must go to student reception and explain why they need to make a call. The call request will be logged with a record of the reason for the call. Calls will only be allowed in genuine emergency situations.

An SSA will either:

- call the parent / carer on their behalf
- support the student to call their parents / carers using a school phone

9. Students who need to leave during the school day

Parents should arrange to pick up their child in advance. If a student needs to be picked up unexpectedly, parents should call the school office. Pouches will be unlocked as the student leaves via reception using the reception unlocking station.

10. Mobile Phone Misuse Pathway

There are clear sanctions in place for students who break these rules, which include:

1. Immediate confiscation of mobile device.
2. Confiscation of mobile device will be logged onto Go4Schools
3. Parent will be asked to attend the academy to collect the mobile device and meet with the pastoral team.
4. The mobile device will be returned to the parent at a parental meeting and a phone-banning letter will be given to the parent. The phone-ban will be in place for 10 school days. This will instruct the student to hand their phone into the school each morning and it will be returned to the student at the end of the day.
5. Ongoing failure to follow the policy will result in escalation in line with the academy's behaviour pathway.

Examples of misuse include:

Pouch Damage

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 directly from the manufacturer. The replacement cost will be £15 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

Lost Pouch

If a student loses their pouch parents will be required to purchase a replacement pouch directly from the manufacturer. The replacement cost will be £25 per pouch.

11. Phone seen, used or heard during the school day

If a student is found in possession of a mobile device outside a Focus Pouch, or if it is heard from inside of a pouch during the school day, the phone will be confiscated, and the Mobile Misuse Pathway will apply.

12. Forgotten pouch

If a student forgets their Pouch, their phone will be confiscated and the office will email home to remind the parent of the policy. The phone will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.

If a student forgets their pouch for a second time in a term, their phone will be confiscated and the SSA will phone home to ask the parent to collect the phone. The Mobile Misuse Pathway will apply.

13. Imitation Unlocking Magnets

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 could lead to a suspension.

14. Faulty Pouch

If a pouch has a fault, the student should notify the school immediately explaining what is the fault with the pouch. If any damage is spotted at a pouch check it will be considered intentional unless the student has raised it previously. If the reported fault is due to manufacturer error the academy will replace the pouch in this instance.

15. Regular Mobile Device and Pouch Checks

Pouch checks will be conducted regularly by Heads of Year or SSAs on climate walk using a mobile unlocking station to ensure that students are adhering to the Mobile Device policy and that pouches have not been damaged.

Checking procedure:

1. The climate walk member of staff will select students at random.
2. Students asked to accompany member of staff outside of room with their Focus Pouch.

3. Staff will use a mobile unlocking station to check that the mobile phone is (a) in the pouch and (b) is switched off.
4. Students to return to class.

16. Suspicion of possessing a mobile device

Mobile phones including headphones and air pods are a prohibited item in school and therefore the academy's search procedures will apply. If a prohibited device is found the Mobile Misuse Pathway will apply.

17. Searching, screening and confiscation with Students

The below is based on guidance from the Department for Education; Searching, screening and confiscation (2018).

Academy staff can search students with their consent for any item. They do not need to get written consent. The Principal and staff authorised by the Principal have the power to search students or their possessions, without consent, where they suspect the student has a "prohibited item".

If a student refuses to co-operate with such a search schools can apply an appropriate disciplinary penalty which would include isolating the student or suspending them from school.

18. Searching without a student's consent

If a child continues to refuse to cooperate after the authorised member of staff is sure that they have fully understood, the parent of the student will be contacted to explain the reasons that a search is needed and to ask for them to attend school to search their child.

If the parent is unable or unwilling to attend school, the student will be sanctioned in line with the academy's behaviour policy. This may result in a suspension.

19. During a search

Under law:

- The person conducting the search may not require the student to remove any clothing other than outer clothing
- A student's possessions can only be searched in the presence of the student and another member of staff, except where there is a risk that serious harm will be

caused to a person if the search is not conducted immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff.

- Schools are able to search lockers and desks for any item provided the student agrees. If the student does not consent, it is possible to search a desk or locker but only for the prohibited items
- Members of staff can use reasonable force when conducting a search for prohibited items, but cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules

20. Confiscation

Prohibited items for the purpose of this policy include:

- Mobile phones
- Headphones/air pods

If a mobile phone is confiscated / banned the following procedure must be followed:

The member of staff who has confiscated the phone should:

1. Add an appropriate sanction onto Go4Schools
2. Device taken to academy reception by the member of staff who has confiscated the device

The reception staff should:

1. The device should be placed in the secure phone locker in a numbered slot.
2. The students name and slot number will be added to the confiscation log.
3. Parent will be asked to attend the academy.
4. The mobile device will be returned to the parent at a parental meeting and a banning letter will be given to the parent. This will instruct the student to hand their phone into the school each morning and it will be returned to the student at the end of the day.
5. Ongoing failure to follow the policy will result in escalation in line with the academy's behaviour pathway.

21. Monitoring Procedures

This policy will be reviewed by the Principal and the Local Governing Body annually. At each review, the policy will be approved by the Principal.

22. Sharing the Mobile Phone Policy

- This policy has been issued in June 2025 and in the future will be reviewed and shared annually in September with students, parents, staff and volunteers
- Any updates will be shared as and when they occur.
- New parents and students on admission alongside the Home Academy Agreement.
- These procedures will form an essential part of induction for all ORA staff and volunteers.