

Ormiston Academies Trust

Ormiston Meridian Academy

Mobile Device Management Policy (Mobile Phone Policy)

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Approved by Trust Board	
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1 Policy aim

In line with DfE guidance and regulations regarding mobile phone use in schools, Ormiston Meridian Academy is a mobile phone free school.

“The Department for Education (DfE) expects schools to implement a policy whereby pupils do not have access to their mobile phone throughout the school day including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.”

The DfE expects staff, parents and pupils to share responsibility in ensuring schools are phone free environments. The full guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools/mobile-phones-in-schools>

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:

Impact of mobile phones on learning:

- The presence of a smart phone affects attention and concentration, impacting learning and recall [of knowledge]
- It can take up to 20 minutes for students to refocus on what they were learning after receiving a notification on their device
- 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.

Impact of mobile phones on mental health & wellbeing:

- Research shows there has been an increase in major depression (145% in girls / 161% in boys) since 2010 when smart phones were introduced.
- Rates of self-harm have tripled and rates of suicide have increased by 91% in boys and 167% in girls since 2010
- 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 our intention to support our students to ensure that mobile devices are not to be seen, used or heard at Ormiston Meridian Academy.

2 Parents' / Carers' Responsibilities

- DfE guidance states: "Parents should also be encouraged to reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free environment."
- Parents should take the time to familiarise themselves with the school's 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 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.

3 Daily Pouching Procedure

Every student will need to place their phone inside the pouch as they enter the school. Most students will do this at line-up. Students who arrive late to school will do this before they enter the school either at (a) late line up or (b) Reception.

- 1 Students' phones switched off and ready while in line up as normal.
- 2 Phones will be switched off and placed in the Yondr Pouch.
- 3 Pouches will be sealed at line up in the presence of a form tutor or member of staff.
- 4 Students will hold their pouches up for Form Tutors to undertake a visual check.
- 5 HoY/Pastoral Lead can undertake spot checks at this stage.
- 6 Any issues will be followed up immediately by the HOY / Pastoral team.
- 7 Students to keep their pouches on them throughout the day.

4 Wet Weather Pouching Procedure

On days where weather does not permit outside line ups, students will enter the building and go to form rooms where students will pouch their phones and hold them up for checking by their tutor.

5 Students who are not present for form time

Students who arrive late will have their pouch checked by the member of staff signing them in.

6 Educational Visits

Students who attend educational visits will pouch their phones in the same manner as for the normal academy day.

7 Medical Pouches

DfE guidance states: “Maintained schools and academies have a duty under the Children and Families Act 2014 to have arrangements in place to support pupils with medical conditions. In meeting this duty, the governing body, proprietor or management committee must have regard to the statutory guidance supporting pupils with medical conditions at school. In some circumstances, supporting a pupil with their medical condition can involve the use of a mobile phone. For example, pupils with diabetes might use continuous glucose monitoring with a sensor linked to their mobile phone to monitor blood sugar levels. Where mobile phone use allows pupils to manage their medical condition effectively, it would not be reasonable for a school to prevent this.”

Therefore, students who have been given permission by the DSL to use their phone for medical purposes, e.g. to check insulin levels will be given a Medical Pouch which is secured by Velcro rather than locked, enabling the student to access their phone when needed.

8 Removal of Phones from Pouches at the End of the Day

At the end of the day, students will unlock their phone pouches at stations positioned near exit gates, allowing them access to their phones.

9 Contacting Parents During the School Day

If a student believes that they need to make an emergency call, they must ask the teacher to call High Profile and explain why they need to make a call. The call request will be logged on Arbor with a record of the reason for the call.

The High Profile staff member or office staff will either:

- call the parent / carer on their behalf.
- support the student to call their parents / carers using a school phone.
- use the unlocking station located in reception to unlock the students Yondr Pouch allowing the student to access their mobile phone to directly message their parent / carer.

DfE guidance states: “Where parents need to contact their child during the school day, they should be directed to the school office, where staff should be aware of the school’s policy on relaying messages and facilitating contact.”

10 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.

11 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 to be logged onto Arbor.
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.

Examples of misuse include:

- Pouch Damage or Lost Pouch.

The pouches are very robust, but if a student damaged the pouch, they would be held responsible for damaging school property, so parents would be charged for a replacement at a cost of £20 charged to Parent Pay.

- Examples of damage include:

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

12 Phone Seen, Used or Heard During the School Day

DfE guidance states: "Schools should feel confident to use their power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty where their policy is clearly breached, for instance where a mobile phone is used by a pupil or is heard ringing in a pupil's bag. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully...Headteachers are backed by DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices, if they consider it proportionate, for whatever length of time they deem proportionate."

If a student is found in possession of a mobile device outside a 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.

13 Forgotten Pouch

If a student forgets their pouch, their phone will be confiscated and the office will call home to remind the parent of the policy. The phone will be returned to the parent at the end of the school day. The Mobile Misuse Pathway will apply.

14 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.

15 Accidental Damage

If a pouch breaks by accident, the student should notify the school immediately explaining what happened. If any damage is spotted at a pouch check it will be considered intentional unless the student has raised it previously. The academy will replace the pouch in this instance.

16 Regular Mobile Device and Pouch Checks

Pouch checks will be conducted regularly by High Profile members of staff 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. High Profile members of staff to select two males and two females.
2. Students asked to accompany member of staff outside of room with their Yondr Pouch.
3. High Profile member of staff to 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.

17. Suspicion of possessing a mobile device

Mobile phones including headphones are a prohibited item in school and therefore the academy's search procedures will apply including the use of a metal detecting wand. If a prohibited device is found the Mobile Misuse Pathway will apply.

18. Searching with a Student's Consent

In line with 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.

19. Searching without a Student's Consent

Only the Principal or member of staff authorised by the Principal can conduct a search without a student's consent.

The person conducting the search must be the same sex as the student being searched, and another staff member must be present.

Any member of staff can carry out a search if he or she reasonably believes there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not conducted immediately and another member of staff cannot be summoned.

Authorised staff members can search for certain items without a student's consent, including:

- Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to property
- Any prohibited item which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for
- Searches without consent can only be carried out on the school premises or where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of a student, for example on school trips.

20. 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.

21. Confiscation

DfE guidance states: “Schools should feel confident to use their power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty where their policy is clearly breached, for instance where a mobile phone is used by a pupil or is heard ringing in a pupil’s bag. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully...Headteachers are backed by DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices, if they consider it proportionate, for whatever length of time they deem proportionate.”

Prohibited items include:

- Mobile phones
- Headphones
- Smart Watches

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 Arbor
2. Device taken to academy reception by the member of staff who has confiscated the device

The reception staff should:

1. place the phone in the secure phone locker in a numbered slot.
2. add the students’ name and slot number will be added to the confiscation log.
3. contact parents asking them to attend the academy.

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.

Ongoing failure to follow the policy will result in escalation in line with the academy’s behaviour pathway.

22. 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.

23. Sharing the Mobile Phone Policy

- This policy will be 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 OMA staff and volunteers