

Dear Parents/Carers,

At Loreto Grammar School, we are committed to providing an environment where every young person feels safe, supported and able to achieve their full potential. As part of this commitment, we continually review our practices to ensure that students can flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

Young people are growing up in an increasingly connected world, bringing many opportunities but also significant challenges. Research and experience increasingly highlight the impact that mobile phones can have on concentration, learning, wellbeing, friendships and engagement during the school day.

Following extensive consultation and careful consideration, we are introducing a phone-free school day for all students in Years 8 to 11 from September 2026 through the use of Yondr pouches. This decision follows surveys conducted with students, parents and staff throughout the 2025-2026 academic year. The findings highlighted significant concerns regarding distractions to learning, student wellbeing and the impact of mobile phones on social interaction during the school day. The feedback received played an important role in shaping the school's decision to introduce this initiative.

Our aim is not simply to limit phone use, but to create an environment where students can focus on learning, engage more fully with one another and be fully present throughout the school day.

Yondr has worked with schools internationally for over a decade, supporting healthier and more engaging school cultures. Schools using the Yondr programme have reported:

- Improved student wellbeing and safety
- Increased engagement in learning
- Reductions in behavioural referrals
- Stronger face-to-face social interaction among students

How the Programme will work

Each student in Years 8 to 11 will be issued with a Yondr pouch for use throughout the school year.

The pouch will be provided by the school at no cost to families. Students are expected to take responsibility for its care and use throughout the year. Yondr pouches remain the property of Loreto Grammar School and must be returned to the school at the end of each academic year in good condition. Lost, damaged or unreturned pouches will incur a replacement charge of £20.

Each School Day

On arrival

Students will switch off their mobile phone, place it inside their Yondr pouch and lock the pouch under staff supervision during registration or assembly.

Email: info@loretogs.omagh.ni.sch.uk

Web: www.loretogs.com

Office: 028 8224 3633

During the school day

Principal: Mrs Susan Cullinan

Students will keep the locked pouch securely in their possession, typically within their school bag. Mobile phones will not normally be accessed during the school day. Any use of a mobile phone during the school day for educational purposes will be directed and supervised by a member of staff.

At the end of the school day

Students will unlock their pouch at designated unlocking stations before leaving school. Students will then take both their phone and pouch home ready for use the following day.

This process is straightforward and will become part of the normal daily routine for students.

Communication During the School Day

Student safety remains our highest priority.

Should a parent/carers need to contact their child urgently during the school day, they should do so through the School Office on 028 8224 3633.

Similarly, if a student needs to contact home during the school day, arrangements can be made through the School Office.

Students with Medical Needs

We recognise that a small number of students may require access to a mobile device to support a specific medical need. Appropriate arrangements will be made on an individual basis and relevant families will be contacted directly where necessary.

Students Who Do Not Bring a Phone to School

Bringing a mobile phone to school is not compulsory.

If your daughter does not bring a mobile phone to school, a signed note, letter or email from a parent/carers should be provided to confirm this. Any student who declares that they have not brought a mobile phone to school and is subsequently found to be in possession of one will be considered to be in breach of the school's Digital Devices and Mobile Phone Policy.

Failure to Follow the Procedure

All students are expected to comply with the Yondr programme and associated procedures.

Any breaches of the phone-free school day expectations will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Positive Behaviour Management Policy.

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Lost or Damaged Pouches

Students are responsible for looking after their pouch and ensuring it remains in good condition.

Any pouch that is lost, deliberately damaged, tampered with or not returned to the school will incur a replacement charge of £20.

If accidental damage occurs, students should report this immediately to a member of staff.

The Yondr pouch is not designed to replace a protective phone case and students should continue to take appropriate care of their device.

Responsibility for Personal Devices

As with all personal items brought to school, mobile phones remain the responsibility of the student. The school accepts no responsibility for loss, theft or damage to personal devices on school premises or during school activities. Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring appropriate insurance arrangements are in place where required.

Frequently Asked Questions

How quickly can students unlock their pouches at the end of the day?

The unlocking process is very quick and students generally move through unlocking stations without delay. Staff will be available to support students, particularly during the initial stages of implementation.

What happens if a student arrives late or has permission to leave school early?

The School Office will have access to an unlocking device to support students who arrive after registration or need to leave school before the end of the day.

Will my child's phone be safe?

Students remain in possession of their phone throughout the school day. The phone remains secured within the locked pouch, which students keep with them. Students should continue to take normal care of their belongings at all times.

What happens if a student forgets to unlock their pouch before leaving school?

This rarely occurs. If it does happen, arrangements can be made to unlock the pouch when the student returns to school.

LORETO

GRAMMAR SCHOOL

JAMES STREET OMAGH BT78 1DL



What happens if a student forgets their pouch?

Principal: Mrs Susan Cullinan

Students are expected to bring their Yondr pouch to school every day. If a pouch is forgotten, the student's phone will be stored securely until the end of the school day. Repeated failure to bring a pouch may result in a replacement charge being applied.

Why are only Years 8 to 11 involved?

The Yondr programme will initially be introduced for students in Years 8 to 11. Students in Years 12 to 14 are not included in the Yondr programme and will continue to follow the school's existing mobile phone procedures. The school will monitor the impact of the initiative and review arrangements as part of its ongoing evaluation.

At Loreto Grammar School, we believe that young people benefit from opportunities to learn, connect and grow without the constant distractions of mobile technology. We look forward to working in partnership with parents and students as we introduce this important initiative and continue to foster a positive, focused and supportive learning environment.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs S. Cullinan

Principal

Ms SJ Fahy

Vice Principal for Pastoral Care and Welfare

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