

**Principal: Mrs C Robson**  
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Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to inform you about an update to our mobile phones policy at Ormiston Maritime Academy. As you will no doubt be aware, 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.

Over recent months we have worked with four different schools across Ormiston Academies Trust and our local area who have all successfully implemented a mobile phone free school policy to understand how this might work for our school community and to ensure we have clear knowledge and understanding of its impact on our students.

Extensive research across the sector has shown that phone-free educational environments support academic performance, student behaviour and engagement, and student wellbeing and mental health.

**We have therefore taken the carefully considered decision to transition to a mobile-phone free learning environment from January 2025, when students return from their Christmas holidays.**

At Maritime, we are committed to laying the foundations for a successful future for all our students. Creating a calm, safe and distraction free environment is a core part of this, alongside a knowledge rich-curriculum and excellent teaching which creates a more positive school environment for everyone.

### **New academy process**

We will be making our school a mobile phone-free space to improve teaching and learning using a system called [Yondr](#). Yondr has been implemented in over 3,000 schools across 21 countries to facilitate an engaged learning environment. Other Ormiston schools have implemented a similar policy with great success and we are confident Yondr will have a positive impact here as well.

The Yondr Program utilises a simple, secure pouch that stores a mobile phone and other devices. Every student will secure their mobile phone, smart watch and air pods in a personally assigned Yondr pouch when they arrive at school. **Students will maintain possession of their items and will not use them until their pouches are opened at the end of the school day.**

Students are required to bring their Yondr pouch to and from school each day and are responsible for their pouch at all times. Your child will receive their Yondr pouch on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and will practice how to use it throughout the first week.

We will be speaking to all students in year group assemblies week beginning the 9<sup>th</sup> December to ensure they are fully aware of the positive benefits behind this decision and the different logistics involved in the process.

As is the case with all school policies, there will be flexibilities in place to allow for students who need to access their phone during the school day for medical reasons or emergencies. We also want to reiterate that should your child have a concern or be unwell during the school day, the robust safeguarding and safety processes we currently have in place will be followed and we will contact you directly to inform you of any matters.



As a core part of our school community, we will of course keep you updated throughout this process. I hope this letter shares a helpful update and answers to any immediate questions you may have. However, I have also included a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document that will answer further questions and some useful evidence below on the benefits of mobile-phone free schools.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school directly at [office@omacademy.co.uk](mailto:office@omacademy.co.uk) and place in the subject line "Yondr" or you can telephone the academy on 01472 310015. You can also fill in our on-line survey by scanning the QR code below with any queries you have. Please complete this by Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2024.



Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours Sincerely,

Carrienne Robson  
Principal  
Ormiston Maritime Academy

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### Useful research on the benefits of phone-free schools.

#### **1. Learning and Academic Performance**

A study (Beland and Murphy, 2015) which surveyed schools in four English cities (Birmingham, Leicester, London, and Manchester) found that 'student performance in high stakes exams significantly increases post ban'. Specifically, introducing a mobile phone ban in schools increased students' GCSE scores. The impact of the ban was especially positive for lower achieving students.

#### **2. Mental Health**

One study by Jean Twenge found that moderate use of mobile phones (4 hours per day) was associated with lower psychological well-being. Individuals who spent more than 7 hours per day were less; curious, self-controlled, and emotionally stable and more than twice as likely to:

- Have been diagnosed with depression or anxiety.
- Have been treated by a mental health professional.
- Have taken medication for behavioural issues in the last 12 months.

### Survey from Yondr

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

