

Yondr Email

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North Clackamas Schools

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## Supporting Student Wellness: Creating Phone-Free Spaces



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North Clackamas Schools aims to ensure that every student learns in a safe and distraction-free space. To help create this kind of environment, NCSD sought the perspective of students, staff and community members. Through this engagement, we understand the importance phones play in young people's lives and with families in our community. Students and parents surfaced the impact of phones in a learning environment like school.



While NCSD has had years of implementing “off and away” phone environments, NCSD is committed to a

phone-free learning environment. To help support this phone free commitment, starting in September 2024, students at all middle and high schools in NCSD must keep their phones, smartwatches, and earbuds in a special pouch provided by the school if they decide to bring them to school.

The pouch has a magnetic lock that can only be opened with a unique key. Each student will get their own pouch at the start of the school year and will keep their devices in this locked pouch for the duration of the school day.



## What Can Students Expect?

When students arrive at school, they turn off, or silence their devices and put them in their pouch. The pouch is then locked, and students can carry it with them throughout the day. At the end of the day, students can unlock their pouches at specific locations in the school.

If a student has a medical condition requiring them to use their phone, like checking blood sugar, schools will work with families to accommodate the needs of their student.



## What About During a Safety Event?

We carefully reviewed what to do in safety situations before recommending the use of pouches knowing safety is our top priority.



We learned from safety experts that allowing students to use their phones during emergencies can make things less safe. Experts, including those from the National School Safety and Security Services, found that students often get distracted when using their phones during emergencies. Instead of following safety instructions from adults, they might try to make calls, send texts, or check social media, which can put students in additional danger.



Once students are safe and the situation is under control, pouches can be opened so students can contact their families. The district has several handheld devices that can unlock the pouches anywhere in the school if needed during an emergency. In addition, the pouches don't block cell signals, and parents can still track their child's



location using services like Find My iPhone, FamilyLink, or Findmykids.



Please check our FAQ section below for more details about how students can access their phones in emergencies.

To conclude, know that this work is only starting and we will be surveying students, families, and staff to understand the impact of this change. We are confident that creating phone free spaces will positively contribute to the wellbeing of students mental and emotional health as well as a distraction free environment.

We are looking forward to partnering on this journey with you.

## Resources For Families & Community

<https://www.anxiousgeneration.com/resources>



## Pouches Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is a pouch?**

- NCSD has partnered with YONDR for student pouches. The Yondr pouch is a secure bag that is used to store an individual's mobile device or devices. It is secured and unlocked with a special locking device.

- **How does it work?**

- As students enter school, they place their phone, smartwatch, etc. in their assigned pouch.
- Students close and secure their pouch manually and keep it with them throughout the day.
- When leaving school, students tap their pouch on a base unit to unlock it and have access to their devices. After emptying their pouch at the end of the day we recommend locking it again to avoid having something locked in the pouch while at home.
- [More information on how it works](#)

- **Why is North Clackamas introducing Yondr pouches?**

- NCSD is committed to student wellness and success. Recent surveys from our North Clackamas students indicate that cell phone

use negatively impacts grades, relationships, and mental health.

- 86% of NCSD students report using phones during class.
- 36% of NCSD students report being distracted by other students' use of phones.
- 49% of NCSD students report cell phones have negatively impacted their grades.
- 47% of NCSD students report cell phones have negatively impacted their mental health.
- 24% and 23% of NCSD students report cell phones have negatively impacted their relationships with family and friends respectively.

- **Why can't the school just implement a zero-tolerance policy and allow students to keep their phones put away?**

- NCSD has tried this approach. Research shows that it has been ineffective nationwide, as it has also been in our district. There is an unneeded relationship strain between the adults who are trying to follow the rules and the students who are trying to get to their devices. Issues of addiction play into this dynamic. The pouches will reinforce the policy and support students in managing the temptation of having students and all of their friends have access to their devices during the school day. Furthermore, the pouches will contribute to a sense of community in which all students will experience the same environment while also learning about the balance of phone use and their wellbeing.

- **How will students receive a Yondr pouch?**

- During the first week of school, on Friday, September 6th, students will receive a pouch during one of their classes along with a lesson about why and how to use the pouch. The pouch is property of the school.

- **How will the process work at arrival and dismissal?**

- Upon entering school students will place their phone, smart watch, and other phone-like devices in the pouch. When leaving the building at the end of the day there will be unlocking stations set out throughout each school's campus.

- **Will my student's phone be safe?**

- Just like current practice, students keep their phone with them during the day.

- **What if a student needs to leave the building before dismissal?**

- We will have unlocking stations in the office for students that have verified absences or verified early releases.

- **What if a parent/guardian wants to reach their child during the school day?**

- All students have access to chromebooks with email. One option is to plan ahead by giving timely check-ins such as updating after school

plans. A guardian may say “check your email by 2:00pm and confirm you got it by emailing back.” Students and parents can email one another during the day. For emergency and timely issues parents can call the office and we can deliver messages or bring students to the office for any communication needs.

- **What if there is a school emergency?**

- School safety experts share that students having access to cell phones during school emergencies can negatively impact student safety for a variety of reasons. For example:
  - Student use of cell phones during an emergency can distract their attention from the critical safety and emergency directions given by staff.
  - Cell phone use by students during an emergency often results in inaccurate or incomplete information and, in doing so, may disrupt and delay effective public safety response.
  - Cell phone use by students can impede site safety by accelerating parental and community arrival at the scene of an emergency during times when officials may be attempting to evacuate students to another site.
  - Student cell phone use during an emergency may overload cell tower capacity, limiting critical school and first responder communication.
- Once students are safe, if necessary, pouches can be unlocked via multiple handheld unlocking devices, so students can contact family members. In cases of immediate crisis, pouches can be unlocked by any means necessary.
- Communication with parents will continue to occur through the district’s mass notification and communication tools.

- **What if a student has their phone out of their pouch?**

- The pouch is property of the school. If a student is caught on their phone, the school will take the following actions
  - First Incident: Schools will document the offense and ask the student to solve the issue (in most cases this means put the phone in the pouch)
  - Second Incident: Schools will reteach the “Why” behind the expectations, collect the phone in the office, and notify guardian(s). The phone will be given back at the end of the day.
  - Third Incident: Schools will reteach the Why, collect the phone and issue the phone back to the guardian(s), not the student.
  - Fourth Incident: Schools will meet with the student and guardian(s) to construct a plan tailored to meet the needs of the student.

- **What happens if a pouch is damaged?**
  - For pouches that are damaged, replacement pouches can be made available. For excessive damage due to inappropriate use or vandalism (such as cutting, ripping, or puncturing the pouch), incidents will be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- **What happens if a student doesn't have their pouch?**
  - Phones will be held in the office for students that don't bring their pouch. We will have locked cabinets for students.
- **What if a student needs their personal device for a medical issue?**
  - Students with notes from their medical professionals can be issued a medical device bag which can ensure access to their phone is more readily available than the normal pouches. Like all medical protocols, we will work with students and families to ensure medical needs are taken care of.
- **Will students still be able to listen to music?**
  - Chromebooks have access to music with wired headsets. Bluetooth devices should be held in the pouch and not be out. When it is appropriate, students can still have access to music.
- **What happens if a student forgets to unlock their pouch before leaving the building?**
  - Schools have many after school programs and athletic events. Students are welcome to return if the building is open to unlock their device.
- **Can teachers have students use their personal devices for instructional purposes?**
  - NCSD has issued chromebooks to every student taking the educational need for phones away. Most academic benefits that come from phones are also available on the district issued chromebooks.
- **Do the pouches block cell signals or the internet?**
  - Pouches still allow for cell service. We know many families use tracking devices to ensure the location of their students. This will still be available even when the phone is in the pouch.
- **How will this be enforced during school trips or other off-campus activities?**
  - Mostly, the policy will remain "off and away" and pouches will remain locked. On most trips we will bring unlocking devices in the event that cell phones are needed.
- **What about going to Sabin Schellenberg classes for high school students?**
  - For students attending Sabin Schellenberg, the expectations will still be that phones are kept off and away on the trip to and from Sabin Schellenberg. Sabin Schellenberg will have access to unlocking stations just like all of our neighborhood schools in the event that

students have emergencies or have a verified absence from a Sabin Schellenberg class.

- **For students planning to drive to Sabin Schellenberg, will they be allowed access to their phone?**
  - The dangers of access to phones while driving, especially with limited time to get from one class to another, far outweighs the benefits of having a phone accessible during driving. We encourage all students to utilize district transportation to and from Sabin Schellenberg classes.
- **What about after school activities?**
  - Once the bell rings at the end of the day, all students will have access to unlocking stations regardless of whether they are staying for after school activities or not.
- **Will elementary schools be using Yondr pouches?**
  - No, not at this time. Elementary schools will continue to be no-phone spaces but there are no current plans to introduce pouches to elementary.

## Videos

- Yondr Case Study: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeyGeT0mlDc>
- Kids talking about their experience with having a phone: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YXK2vy8Y90>

**\*\*This document as well as our website will continue to be updated as we learn more about implementing phone-free spaces.**



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