



Ormiston NEW Academy

PRIDE – ENDEAVOUR – TOGETHER

Marsh Lane, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV10 6SE

Principal: Mr Craig Cooling

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5th June 2025

Mobile phone usage during the school day

Dear Parents/Carers,

As part of our ongoing efforts to provide the best possible learning environment for our students, we are updating our policy regarding the use of mobile phones within our academy in preparation for next academic year. We aim to move to a mobile phone free school in September 2025 for all students in Years 7-11.

This will involve every student being issued with a lockable mobile phone pouch to place their phone in whilst they are on academy site. Students will keep possession of their own pouch but will have no access to their phone throughout the day. Mobile phone pouches will be unlocked as students leave the academy site.

Mobile phones have become an integral part of our daily lives, providing convenience and connectivity. However, their presence in the school environment has also introduced challenges that require our collective attention. In recent days we have been sharing some research from the Department for Education with students about how the use of mobile phones impacts on their mental health, wellbeing and learning. The information shared includes:

Impact on mental health & wellbeing:

- 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. (feeling panicky or upset when the phone is unavailable, finding it difficult to control the amount of time spent on the phone and using the phone to the detriment of other enjoyable activities)

Impact on learning:

- The presence of a smart phone affects attention and concentration, impacting learning and recall
- 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.

In response to Department for Education guidance, prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day (effective January 2024) the academy adopted a policy where pupils keep possession of their mobile phones only on

the strict condition that they are never used, seen or heard. Students were asked to ensure that their phones were switched off and placed in their school bags and were not to be switched on or used during the school day. Despite this, there continues to be too many instances where mobile phones are being used in school.

Please note that schools have the power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty. 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 proportionately and lawfully.

Please note that the Principal is supported by the DfE to confiscate mobile phones and similar devices for the length of time they deem proportionate. This may include requesting that mobile phones are handed in on arrival to the academy.

We firmly believe it is in the best interest of our students' educational experience and personal development and ask that all parents and carers discuss and reinforce the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with mobile phone use and the benefits of a mobile phone-free school environment.

If you have any concerns or require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we strive to create the most conducive learning environment for our students. We will be holding a parent consultation evening on Thursday 19th June 2025 from 4:00-5:00pm to answer any questions that you may have and demonstrate how the new mobile phone pouches work.

Your sincerely,

L. Clarke

Mrs. L. Clarke
Vice Principal Safeguarding, Attendance, Behaviour and Welfare
Ormiston NEW Academy