



HAMPSTEAD SCHOOL

Learning together Achieving together

October 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

This letter contains lots of important information on a new change we are bringing in, so we thought it would be helpful to summarise the key ideas. There is plenty of further detail below:

- **We are making Hampstead School a phone-free environment**
- **This will involve the use of lockable pouches that are opened and closed at the start and end of school each day.**
- **This will come at no cost to you unless your child damages or loses their pouch.**

You will have seen in the media that an increasing number of schools are deciding to implement full mobile phone bans. Other schools are insisting that all students hand in their mobile phones on entry to school, before having them returned at the end of the day.

These policies are in response to increasing concerns about the impact of mobile phones on the mental health and academic achievement of young people, concerns shared by many of our parents, students and staff.

Whilst we recognise the benefits these approaches can bring, we also appreciate that they bring issues with them. Many parents and carers need to be able to contact their children on the journey to and from school, and whole-school hand-in systems can be time consuming and result in the loss or damage of expensive devices.

Over the past few months, we have been working to develop an approach that:

- 1) Makes Hampstead School a phone-free space, with all the related benefits to teaching and learning, wellbeing and mental health. This also applies to any devices that can be connected to the internet, including smart watches.
- 2) Enables students to carry a mobile phone, should their parent/carer want them to, on the journey to and from school.
- 3) Avoids mass hand-in systems, with all of the practical problems they entail.

In November we will be launching the Yondr mobile phone pouch system. This system has been implemented successfully in over 3,000 schools across 21 countries, including in a number of schools local to us in North West London.

We have selected this option as we believe it is in the best interests of all our children to become a phone-free zone. We truly appreciate your full support in adoption of this system at Hampstead.

Yours faithfully,

Tamsin Morrell
Assistant Head

Frequently asked questions

How does this system work?

All students are assigned a pouch with a magnetic locking system. As they arrive at school, students switch off and secure their mobile phone in the pouch. They will not be able to access it until their pouches are opened at the end of the school day.

Do I have to pay for the pouch?

No – we will provide all students with their first pouch free of charge. In fact, you could make money from the process – should your child leave the school we will pay £10 for pouches returned in good condition.

What if my child does not have a mobile phone?

The pouch is going to become part of our uniform and equipment policy, and so your child should carry a pouch in their bag even if they do not carry a mobile phone. It may sometimes be used to ask students to store other small items we may have previously confiscated and returned e.g. Jewellery, air pods etc.

What if my child loses or damages the pouch?

Pouches will be named and numbered, and so we hope that they will generally be returned if lost. It will be your child's responsibility to take care of the pouch. If they do lose or damage the pouch, they will be asked to cover the cost of a replacement at £25.

How will I contact my child during the school day?

There should be no need to contact your child during the school day except for in emergency situations. Should this be the case please contact Enquiries and copy in the relevant Year Team Leadership.

enquiries@hampsteadschool.org.uk

7@hampsteadschool.org.uk

8@hampsteadschool.org.uk

9@hampsteadschool.org.uk

10@hampsteadschool.org.uk

11@hampsteadschool.org.uk

sixthform@hampsteadschool.org.uk

What if there is an urgent need for my child to use their mobile phone?

There should not be any situation where students need to use their mobile phones, but if there is a genuine reason then they will be directed to use the phone in Reception or in their Head of Year office.

External Appointments

If your child has an appointment e.g. hospital, dentist etc., and needs to leave school early, you should:

1. Download the StudyBugs app and use it to notify the school of an upcoming appointment.
2. Remind your child what time they need to leave school.

Illness/First Aid

If your child is unwell or requires First Aid, parents/carers will be telephoned by the school as usual.

Detentions after school

Parents/carers are notified of pending detentions by email - why the detention is taking place, what time it begins and what time it ends. Children will be able to unlock their pouch after detention.

After School Clubs

Unlocking stations will be available at the end of the school day for children to access, alternatively, there will be stations available at the end of their clubs.

Will my child's phone be safe?

Students are in possession of their phone - in their pouch - for the entire school day. We will advise students to store the pouch in their backpacks where it is completely safe.

My child is in Sixth Form – will they have to use a pouch?

Yes, Sixth Form students will also be issued with a pouch, but these will not be magnetically sealed and the students will be able to access their phones during the school day. However, this will only be in designated areas and their phones will be subject to confiscation if they are seen outside of these areas.

What would happen if my child does not use the pouch, and is found with a mobile phone whilst on the school site?

As this is becoming part of our Standard Operating Procedures it is important that all children follow these rules, as such we will increase the sanction for the breaking of these rules. Should a child be seen with their mobile phone whilst on the school site, the phone will be confiscated and will only be returned when a parent/carer comes to collect it.

What happens if my child forgets their pouch?

As this will now form part of the formal uniform policy, failure to bring their pouch will result in the phone being confiscated, it will be returned at the end of the school day.

What happens if a student forgets to open their pouch at the end of the day?

In Yondr's experience, this almost never happens. All students funnel past the unlocking stations at the exits, they want their phones back and don't forget to unlock their pouches. If they do arrive home with a phone in a pouch, they can either come back to school to unlock it, or have a phone free evening!

How quick is the unlocking process?

The unlocking process is quick and takes under a second per student. While students are still getting used to how to unlock pouches, staff will be on hand with mobile unlocking stations to stop queues forming in the first few weeks. If needed, we will add extra unlocking points.

How can I help my child reduce their reliance on their mobile phone during the school day?

Make sure they have their planner and a copy of their timetable within it, and a spare if necessary. Please ensure that your child's Parent Pay is kept topped up. Check MS Teams each evening for home learning and other key notices.

How can I find out more about this initiative?

We have included a summary of FAQs about how this system works within this letter. The relevant policies are available on our website. We would also recommend reading the Anxious Generation and reviewing their website <https://www.anxiousgeneration.com/> for more information on why this policy is so important. We will be organising a parent/carer meeting online on **Wednesday 6th November at 5.00pm**, details to follow.

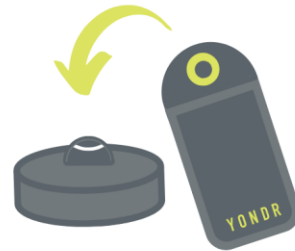
How the pouches work



As students enter school, they place their phone in their assigned Yondr Pouch.



Students close and secure their Pouch, keeping it on them throughout the day.



When leaving school, students tap their Pouch on a Base to retrieve their phone.