

Harwood Union Middle/High School

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Harwood Families and Guardians,

Collectively, the Harwood Staff has spent time since students started their summer break planning and preparing for the implementation of Harwood Union Middle High School to be a **phone-free space in order to continue strengthening engagement across our community and improve overall student mental health and well-being.**

With some of the final federal COVID funds (Elementary & Secondary School Emergency relief money - ESSER) we are purchasing a program called [Yondr](#) to help facilitate the successful implementation of phone-free space. Yondr has been implemented in over 2,000 schools across 16 countries and **they have consistently found that learning and social behavior improve drastically when students are fully engaged with their teachers and classmates.**

The Yondr Program utilizes a simple, secure pouch that stores a phone, smartwatch and Bluetooth headphones such as Airpods. Every student will secure their phone, smartwatch, and Bluetooth headphones/AirPods in a personally assigned Yondr pouch when they arrive at school. Students will maintain possession of their phones but will not be able to 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.**

Yondr has received responses to their annual surveys from over 1,200 school partners, and after implementing the Yondr Education Program:

- **84% saw a positive change in student engagement**
- **72% saw a positive change in student behavior**
- **68% saw a positive change in academic performance**

Of their most recent impact survey of over 370 of Yondr's school partners:

- **86% saw a positive impact in student safety and wellness**

We are looking forward to a similar positive trend at Harwood this coming school year.

In partnership,
Meg, Laurie and Bethany

HUMHS PHONE PROCEDURES

HUMHS is a phone-free space. If students chose to bring their phones to school instead of leaving them at home or in their car they are expected to follow the procedures described below.

DAILY PROCEDURE:

As students **Arrive to School**, they will:

1. Turn their phone off.
2. Place their phone, smartwatch and Bluetooth headphones/AirPods inside their Yondr Pouch and lock it at the threshold (in the lobby they enter). Please note: *School staff will supervise this process but it is the responsibility of students to follow this expectation.*
3. Store their Pouch:
 - Grades 9-12 in their backpack for the day.
 - Grades 7-8 in their lockers for the day.

At dismissal, students will unlock their Pouch, remove their phone and put their Pouch in their backpack.

Students arriving late or leaving early will lock/unlock their pouch in the **Front Office when signing in or out.**

It is the student's responsibility to bring their Pouch to school with them each day. Every student is assigned a personal Yondr Pouch. While the Yondr Pouch is considered school property, it is each student's responsibility to bring their Pouch with them to school every day and keep it in good working condition.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is the school introducing a Cell Phone free school environment?

Harwood is seeking to limit distractions in the classroom and improve overall student engagement, mental health and well-being.

Requiring students to lock their phones away seems like a punishment for students. Is this the case?

This is not a punitive measure. The intention is three-fold:

- to create classroom environments where teachers can teach and students can learn free from distractions caused by the personal use of devices;
- to reduce the negative impacts for ALL students of inappropriate use of devices at school, such as cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and incidents involving mobile phones that detract from a healthy school climate; and
- to increase meaningful face-to-face connections between students.

Can students leave their phones in the car or at home?

Yes, students can leave their phones outside of school! If they are found to have a phone in the building, the levels of consequences apply.

What is a Yondr pouch?

The Yondr Pouch is a secure bag that is used to store an individual's mobile device or devices. It is locked and unlocked with a special magnetic locking device.



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.

How will students receive a Yondr pouch?

Upon returning to school in August 2024, all students in grades 7-12 will be assigned a Yondr pouch to secure their phone, smartwatch and Bluetooth headphones/AirPods. The pouch is the property of the school and is considered on loan to the student during the school year. Students are responsible for the Yondr pouch at all times and for bringing the pouch to and from school each day and keeping them in good condition.

How will students know whose Yondr pouch is whose?

When the school year begins, the pouches will be distributed and each pouch will be labeled with the student's name. Students 9-12 will keep their pouches with them at all times and students 7-8 will keep them in their lockers.

How will the process work at arrival and dismissal?

Upon entering school, students will turn their phone off, place the phone, smartwatch and Bluetooth headphones/AirPods inside of the Yondr pouch, and lock it in front of the designated staff. The pouches will be unlocked at the end of the school day at several designated locations within the building.

What devices will go in the Yondr pouch?

All phones, as well as other Bluetooth devices, including AirPods, smartwatches and other wireless headphones, must be stored in the Yondr pouch.

How is the "end of the day" defined?

The end of the day is 3:20 p.m. Students who leave school before 3:20 will be able to unlock their phones when they sign out.

My student attends a tech center where Yondr pouches are not required. What will the process be for these students?

Tech centers have their own cell phone procedures that are followed when students are there. Upon arrival at Harwood for afternoon classes, students will lock their devices in a Yondr pouch when they sign in.

What if a student needs their personal device for a medical reason?

Students who have a documented medical condition and who need a personal device for monitoring their condition will be provided with a Yondr pouch that has a velcro seal.

Will my student's phone be safe?

Phones in Yondr pouches will remain in student backpacks/lockers for the school day.

Will my student still be able to listen to music?

Students will be able to use headphones with cords to connect to their Chromebooks. They will be able to use the headphones for classroom work when allowed or for listening to music during non-class time. Spotify and Pandora are available on Chromebooks for students to access.

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

If a student needs to leave school early for an approved early dismissal, medical emergency, work assignment, athletic event, or other school-sponsored trip, students will be able to unlock their devices at school just prior to their departure. If returning to school during the instructional day, the Yondr pouch would be locked upon re-entry to the building.

What if a parent or guardian needs to reach their child during the school day?

We understand that emergencies will occur. Parents may contact the main office at (802) 244-5186 to speak with their child if the need arises.

What if a student needs to reach their parent or guardian during the school day?

Students can access a phone in the Front Office to call home if needed during the school day.

How will students find out about changes in athletics and other extracurriculars?

Email will be used to communicate changes in games and practices. Time-sensitive changes will also be announced over the intercom.

What if a student does not comply or damages the case to access their phone?

Students who are found with an unlocked pouch, cause damage to the pouch, or use an alternate phone will be subject to disciplinary action.

What happens if a student doesn't have their Yondr Pouch?

The phone will be turned over to front office staff and secured in the school, safe until the end of the school day. At the end of the school day, students will retrieve their phone from the front office staff.

If a student forgets to unlock the pouch before leaving the building, is there a way for students to unlock the pouch – ie an unlock station outside the school building?

There will not be an unlocking station outside the building. If the student forgets to unlock their pouch, they will be able to return to school before the last late bus departs to unlock it.

If the Yondr pouch is stolen/lost, who is responsible for replacement?

Students will ultimately be responsible for the care of their Yondr pouch. If a student damages or loses their pouch, they will be responsible for replacement and may face disciplinary consequences. As the new school year gets underway, the district will provide families and students with replacement protocols.

How will families be notified if there is a “secure the building” or emergency situation?

Students and staff at all schools practice option-based drills (such as secure the building) throughout the year. Students and staff are instructed to be silent during a drill. The response action guidelines outlined in the high school’s building-level safety plan has a community notification plan for all emergency situations. This notification plan includes first and foremost, parents and guardians of students in the building.

What if my child is at school and needs to call 911?

Every classroom is equipped with a phone that can dial 911. There are no codes or prefixes needed to dial outside of the district. Anyone can dial directly.

What happens if there is an emergency at school?

Every classroom and office in the school is equipped with a phone that can dial 911. Our staff is trained to execute safety and [emergency procedures](#). Students will follow the school’s emergency procedures in the case of an emergency. Schools will communicate with parents through the district’s mass notification and communication tools.

Will teachers be using the Yondr pouches as well?

The expectation for all staff in the building is that phones are away when students are present. Teachers and staff are expected to model responsible cell phone use for students.

What is the cell phone use procedure for visitors during the school day?

Visitors are asked to follow the same cell phone expectations as staff.

Are students able to use their Chromebooks to email outside of huusd.org?

Currently, students in grades 7-12 can email outside the district and will continue to have access to do so. All district email is filtered and monitored.

Will students be able to put their personal email accounts on the district-owned Chromebooks?

No. Students will only be able to use their huusd.org accounts on district-owned devices. All devices and networks owned by the district are monitored.

What tools will the school use to help gauge effectiveness of the Yondr pouches?

The district will use quantitative and qualitative data to assess the effectiveness of Yondr in improving the student experience. This includes School Climate Survey data, DESSA, Youth Risk Behavior Survey data, discipline referrals, as well as student and staff feedback.