



**TARLETON**  
ACADEMY

Headteacher: Mr S Parker

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

### Smartphone Free from September 2025: Yondr Pouches

I am pleased to announce that we have invested in an important initiative which supports our students' wellbeing, enhances their learning experience, and strengthens our commitment to our vision of *Igniting Excellence and Empowering Individuality*. Starting in September 2025 we will be implementing Yondr pouches for students in Years 7 - 11, making Tarleton Academy a fully device-free school for students during the working day.

This initiative builds on our existing mobile phone policy and reflects our commitment to tackling the challenges posed by smart devices and social media. By securely locking their devices in tamper-proof Yondr pouches, students will experience fewer distractions, improved focus in lessons, and stronger social interactions. This decision is endorsed by guidance from the Department for Education, which highlights the negative impacts of mobile phone use on students' mental health, academic performance, and social engagement.

#### **Reasons for this decision**

We are becoming increasingly aware of a significant negative impact on the wellbeing and behaviours of students associated with mobile phone usage, both in and out of school.

Evidence from studies shows that social media can cause significant problems for student mental health and wellbeing. As a school, we also have concerns about how social media is impacting a number of students. Social media is still in its infancy, and something our students are having to learn to deal with as they grow up – a unique challenge faced by this digital generation.

Social media addiction is a genuine concern and research suggests that young people who are heavy users of social media - spending more than two hours per day on social networking sites are more likely to report poor mental health, including symptoms of anxiety and depression. We are determined to keep all our students safe in school. Instances of online bullying are unfortunately common and are made worse due to social media, group chats and mobile phones. By removing mobile phones, we can create a safe space where our students are protected from cyber-bullying, whilst enjoying face-to-face relationships with friends and removing associated worry, anxiety, and depression. We can also enjoy lessons free from distraction, giving our students the opportunity to really focus on their learning.

#### **How will it work?**

From September students who wish to bring a phone to school will need to store it in a Yondr phone pouch during the day. These phone-sized pouches have a strong lock which, once closed, cannot be opened again without a specially designed unlocking device. Pouches will be provided to all students on the return to school in September.



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Our requirement will be that, on arrival to site, students switch off their mobile phone and place them into their own pouch which they will keep in their bag until the end of the day. They will then have access to unlocking devices as they leave the school site. Any student leaving school before the end of the day will be able to unlock their pouch when they sign out.

We are working with Yondr to ensure we have sufficient unlocking devices available at the end of the day for students to be able to unlock their pouches quickly. We will also ensure, to begin with, we allow additional time for students to be able to do this at the end of the day. You can see more information about Yondr pouches here: <https://www.veryondr.com/phone-free-schools>

There will be obvious exceptions. Any student with a confirmed medical diagnosis that requires them to have access to a phone (for example, diabetes) will be issued with an exemption card which allows them to continue to use their phone throughout the school day. They will use a Velcro medical pouch which will allow them access at appropriate times.

Should you need to communicate with your child, you can do so by using our contact form on the school website <https://www.tarletonacademy.org/contact>. Messages will be checked hourly and will then be passed to your child by a member of staff, and you will be informed this has happened. In certain circumstances, it will be possible for pouches to be unlocked and phones accessed in our pastoral offices. Students will of course be able to pick up messages as soon as they unlock their pouches on the way out of school.

If a student brings a mobile phone to school, they must have a Yondr pouch to put it in. If a student is found to have a phone on them that is not in a Yondr pouch, consequences will be put in place and this will be deemed to be serious. This will be the same for damaging the case or trying to unlock the case during the school day.

We have chosen Yondr as a supplier because of the high quality of the pouches they provide. They are very robust and, if looked after, will easily last for 5 years. **Tarleton Academy will fully fund the cost of the pouches in the initial launch and the implementation will come at no cost to families.** If a pouch is lost or damaged, a replacement will need to be purchased at the cost of £20.

Becoming a truly phone-free school will be a big change for some of our students. Your support will be hugely appreciated in enabling your child to see and value the massive benefits that this will bring to them. We are excited for our students to gain all the positives, whether social, academic or mental, that comes with a break from the constant pressure of technology and social media that infiltrates every aspect of our young people's lives.

To further support parents and carers, we will be holding three informal Information Evenings on July 15<sup>th</sup>, July 16<sup>th</sup> and July 17<sup>th</sup> (17:00 – 17:45) to provide detailed explanations of the system and address any questions or concerns. Additionally, we have attached a *Frequently Asked Questions* document that covers many of the key points.

Yours faithfully,



Mr S. Parker  
Headteacher