

Coláiste Cholmcille

Mobile Phone Policy



2024-2025

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this policy is to, firstly, protect the welfare, well-being and safety of all within our school community and, secondly, to provide an environment that is conducive to excellent teaching and learning. The policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and legislation;

Code of Conduct

Anti-bullying policy

Acceptable Internet Use Policy

Education Act, 1998

Education Welfare Act, 2000

Coláiste Cholmcille recognises that mobile phones and personal smart devices are now an integral part of young people's lives and that they can have considerable value when used appropriately. However, in a school setting, it has been our experience that mobile phones and personal smart devices can prevent effective teaching and learning from taking place and inhibit the social development of students. Additionally, instances of inappropriate photographing/videoing of members of the school community and inappropriate communications via social media apps can heighten anxiety and stress levels amongst our students and staff and in some severe cases this can lead to incidents of bullying.

Research carried out in our school community and globally has indicated concerns regarding the negative impact of mobile phones on students' mental health and the negative impact on their academic progress. Research carried out in pilot schools indicates that reduced access to personal devices during class time and breaks can improve academic performance, attention spans, and overall student well-being.

In Coláiste Cholmcille, we believe that the implementation of phone pouches will create a more focused and conducive learning environment for all students. These pouches are designed to establish phone-free zones, fostering a focused and productive learning atmosphere, which we believe will positively impact the overall educational experience of our students.

2. POLICY

1. From the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year, Coláiste Cholmcille will be a mobile phone/personal smart device free zone for students during the school day. This includes smart phones/watches, ear pods and personal tablets etc.
2. On entering the school campus, students will be required to turn their phone off and place it in their phone pouch, where it will remain until the end of the school day. This will also cut off links to other personal smart devices. Other devices such as ear buds must also be placed in the pouch.
3. Inspections may be carried out by Tutors during Tutor class, Year Heads at morning assembly and at various times throughout the day by teachers and Senior Management.
4. Phone pouches will only be unlocked using the Phone unlocking devices at the end of the school day. Unlocking devices will be available to all students at exit points and other strategic locations on our school campus.
5. All communication during the school day between parents/guardians and the school must take place through our school office via the School App or the office phone (071- 9858288).
6. Students who wish to sign out of school early, will do so in the usual way (via the School App) and **must** be collected by parents/guardians **at the school office**. Office staff will release their phone from the Yondr pouch when students are signing out.
7. For students requiring regular access to their mobile phone for medical reasons e.g. monitoring blood sugar, an adapted pouch will be made available upon receipt of a consultant's letter detailing the reason for the required access. School staff will be notified of any student possessing an adapted pouch. School policies still apply.

8. The phone pouch may be opened by a teacher using a portable unlocking device for supervised phone use during class activities. The phone may only be used for the purpose instructed by the teacher and any alternative use would be deemed a breach of this policy. Phones **must** be secured in the phone pouch upon completion of the educational activity.
9. For school excursions and trips, students must have their phone switched off and secured in the Yondr pouch for the bus journey. Upon arrival at the destination, the accompanying teacher **may, if deemed necessary**, unlock the pouch using the portable unlocking device, to allow students to access to their phone. Phones **must** be switched off and secured in the Yondr pouch upon return to the bus. This allows students to focus on social interactions rather than devices for these trips. For school overnight trips, students must have their phone secured in the Yondr pouch from 10:00 pm until 8:00 am the following morning.
10. As per the state/school examinations rules, no mobile phones/personal smart devices are allowed in an examination centre.
11. It is the student's responsibility to keep their phone pouch containing their phone in a safe and secure location (e.g. in their school locker or school bag during the school day). Coláiste Cholmcille accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones or personal smart devices such as smart watches and ear pods.
12. Coláiste Cholmcille will not undertake any investigations into lost, stolen or damaged devices.
13. If a student ignores this policy and has their phone out of the phone pouch, without permission, during the school day, the mobile phone will be confiscated and stored until such time as a parent/guardian comes to collect the phone at the school office. That student will be issued with a lunchtime/afterschool detention.
14. Further breaches of this policy will be considered a serious breach of school rules and repeated offences may result in further disciplinary action, up to and including suspension.
15. Should a student bring a second mobile phone to school in addition to the phone placed in the Yondr pouch (or in place of a confiscated mobile phone) both

phones will be confiscated. Such behaviour will be considered a serious breach of school rules and will result in disciplinary action.

16. If a mobile phone has been confiscated due to a breach of the mobile phone policy, parents/guardians will be notified via the school app as soon as possible.
17. The student will be afforded the opportunity to phone their parent/guardian prior to leaving school.
18. If a student forgets their phone pouch, the student must hand their phone in at the office immediately and it will be returned at the end of the school day. Repeated instances will be treated as a lost pouch and will require the purchase of a new pouch at a cost of €20.
19. The pouch remains the property of Coláiste Cholmcille and will be returned to the school at the end of each academic year. 6th year students on completion of their schooling in Coláiste Cholmcille will return the phone pouch to the school. Any loss of or damage to the pouch will incur a charge of €20 to the parent/guardian to provide for a replacement pouch.
20. All phone pouches will be inspected periodically to ensure that they are still functional and being kept in good order. Students must have their pouch in school even if leaving their phone at home. They will be issued with a sticker stating their phone is at home. All other students must have their phone in their pouch.
21. Charging of any device on school site is strictly prohibited.

DAILY PROCESS

As students arrive to school they will:

- Turn their phone off or into airplane mode and open their Yondr Pouch.
- Place their phone inside their Pouch and secure it .
- Store their Pouch in their backpack for the day.
- After the Period 6 bell students will have access to the tool to unlock their Yondr pouch **Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/unpouch their phones at the main office.*

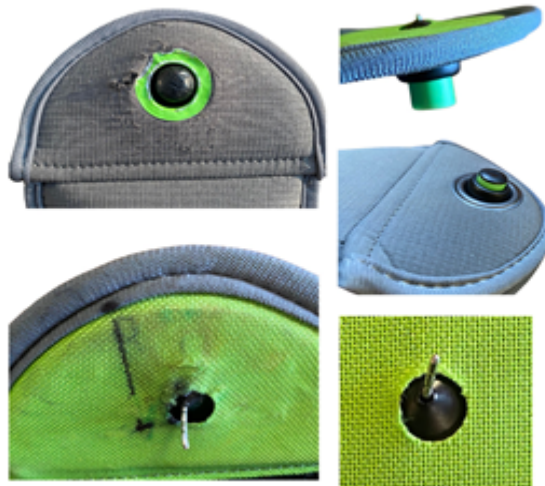
VIOLATIONS

Pouch Damage / Lost Pouch / Using Phone During School

If a student intentionally damages their pouch or is caught on their phone, administration will collect the phone/pouch, call home, and implement appropriate discipline.

Examples of damage:

- Deep scratches on the globe and on the green ring around it
- Intentional pen marks on the inside of the Pouch
- Bent pins
- Pin and button not fully recessing, due to pin damage



3. Forgotten Pouch

If a student forgets their pouch, their phone will be collected and held in the Main Office. Admin will contact home to remind the parent/guardian of the policy. The phone will be returned to the student at the end of the day.

If a student consistently forgets their Pouch, it is considered Lost.
Refer to the Lost Pouch policy above.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Yondr pouch?

Yondr pouch is a magnetic pouch that stores phones and creates a distraction free climate and culture at Coláiste Cholmcille. The Yondr system enables teachers to teach and students to focus on their learning without distractions.

How does it work at Coláiste Cholmcille?

As students arrive at school they will will:

- (i) Turn their device off.
- (ii) Place their mobile device and earbuds in the Yondr pouch and secure it in front of school staff.
- (iii) Store it in their schoolbag for the day.
- (iv) At the end of the day, students will open their pouch, remove their phone and put it in their schoolbag. Students must bring their pouch with them to school each day.
- (v) Students leaving early or staying late after school will unlock their pouch to retrieve their phones at designated safe spaces.



Does it take long to unlock the cases?

No. Yondr unlocking stations are located at designated areas throughout the building in order to unlock pouches. It takes only 2 to 3 seconds to unlock the pouch.

What if my child needs a phone for learning?

Phones can be used for learning at Coláiste Cholmcille. The school can provide students with designated devices. Staff can also access mobile unlocking stations and bring them to class to allow students to access their phones. CCBS will continue to work on increasing the number of devices available to students in school

What if my child needs the phone for medical reasons?

Students who need their phones for monitoring an existing medical condition will have a slightly different pouch that can be opened by the student without the use of the unlocking device.

What if I want to reach my child during the school day?

We want our students to be academically engaged in their learning during the school day. However, in case of an emergency, please contact the main office on 0719858288 or via email at info@ccbs.ie to reach your student.

What happens if the pouch is lost, damaged, or forgotten?

Replacements will cost €20 to be paid to the main office. Students who intentionally damage, tamper with or who fail to arrive with their pouch will be subject to disciplinary action.

Where are designated safe spaces for students to, with permission, remove their phones from their pouch to make a call?

Both Deputy Principal's offices and the Chaplain's office or Home School Liaison Office

Will my student's phone be safe?

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

What if the Yondr pouch gets damaged?

The Yondr pouch is property of the Coláiste Cholmcille. If a student damages or tampers with a Yondr pouch, they will be held responsible. Replacement pouches will be €20. If students are seen with a phone, it will be confiscated and discipline procedures will follow as per the CCBS's Mobile Phone Policy.

How can I clean my student's Yondr pouch?

Spot cleaning or gentle use of a mild disinfectant spray.

What if I have additional questions or need further information?

Please email Coláiste Cholmcille at: info@ccbs.ie

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on;

27th of June 2024

Signed;

Principal;

Chairperson;