



Dear Parents,

After months of consultation and research by our Mobile phone Review Committee, consisting of representatives from BCS Board of Management, Staff, Students' Council & Parents' Association, we wish to inform you of our updated mobile phone policy which will be implemented from September 2023.

To ensure a healthy, engaging, and safe environment for all members of our school community we are becoming a **mobile/ smartphone free school** during the school day from September 2023 by introducing a system called Yondr.

Blackwater Community School recognises that mobile phones are now an integral part of young people's culture and way of life and can be of considerable value when used in an appropriate manner. However, we are also cognisant that phones can be a distraction, can hinder communication and socialisation and can increase levels of anxiety and stress for many students.

The Yondr Program utilizes a simple, secure pouch that stores a phone. Every student will secure their phone in a personally assigned Yondr pouch at the beginning of the school day, once they arrive on school environs, between 8 – 8.30 am. Students will maintain possession of their phones and will not use them until their pouches are opened at the end of the school day as they exit the school environs. Students are required to bring their Yondr pouch to and from school each day and are responsible for their pouch at all times.

Yondr recently surveyed over 900 school partners to measure the effects of creating phone-free educational environments. These schools achieved notable progress in multiple areas:

- *65% of schools saw an improvement in academic performance*
- *74% of schools saw an improvement in student behaviour*
- *83% of schools saw an improvement in student engagement in the classroom.*

If you would like to get in contact with your child during the school day or in an emergency situation, please contact the school office at **058 53620**. If your son/daughter needs to make contact home during the day, they will go to the school office, and you will be contacted immediately.

There will also be measures put in place for students with specific medical requirements on an individual basis, in consultation with their parents/guardians. All students will be trained in the system during their relevant induction day and given their personalised Yondr pouch on their return. Our BOM have generously agreed to support this initiative by subsidising the cost, this has led to a reduced expense of €20 per student in Year 1 and €10 in subsequent years for each student.

In an effort to best serve your child, we appreciate your full support in adoption of the Yondr Program and our revised mobile phone policy attached, for the wellbeing and safety of our whole school community.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Thank you,



**BLACKWATER**  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

## **Mobile/Smartphone Wellbeing Policy**

To ensure a healthy, engaging, and safe environment for all members of our school community we are a **mobile/ smartphone free school** during the school day from the beginning of the academic year 2023.

Blackwater Community School recognises that mobile phones are now an integral part of young people's culture and way of life and can be of considerable value when used in an appropriate manner. However, we are also cognisant that phones can be a distraction, can hinder communication and socialisation and can increase levels of anxiety and stress for many students.

All student enrolled in Blackwater Community School are required to place any mobile phone device in a Yondr magnetic pouch, which is locked once they are on school environs and can only be accessed if enabled by a staff member or when leaving the school environs.

### **DAILY PROCESS**

Once a student arrives on our School environs they will be asked to:

1. Turn off their phone.
2. Place their phone inside their Yondr Pouch and lock the pouch.
3. Store their Pouch in their bag or locker for the school day.

At the end of the school day, students will have the ability to access their phone once off the school environs by unlocking their pouch at a locking station. Students must bring their Pouch to school with them each day and present to a member of the school staff when directed to do so.

\*Students arriving late or leaving early will pouch/unpouch their phones in the school office.

### **VIOLATIONS**

#### **Using a personal Mobile Phone During School Day**

1. If a student uses, or is caught on their phone during the day, their phone will be confiscated and placed in the school office. The parent/guardian will be contacted to tell them that the student's phone has been confiscated and will be asked to collect it in person at the end of the school day. The incident will also be recorded on VS-Ware by the member of staff who confiscates the phone.
2. If the violation is a repeated offense, then the student will also serve an after-school detention.
3. Repeated breaking of this rule will be seen as a serious breach of school policy and may lead to further, and more serious sanctions up to and including suspension.

### **DAMAGED or LOST POUCH**

Any loss or damage of the Pouch, which renders it unusable, will result in the student purchasing a new one at a cost of €20.

### **FORGOTTEN POUCH**

- If a student forgets their Pouch the student will be asked to leave their phone in the care of the Deputy Principal for the day.
- If a student consistently forgets their Pouch, it will be considered Lost. Please refer to the Lost Pouch section above

This policy is available on our school website and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Code of Behaviour

Anti-Bullying Policy

Acceptable Usage Policy (Students)

Social Media Policy

Ratified by BOM \_\_\_\_\_