



Why are St. Mogue's doing this?

This is the key question. If we understand the rationale for the move, the rest should fall into place.

Our children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many exciting opportunities – but also challenges. In February, the Department of Education & Skills issued guidance for schools stating that “*one of the greatest challenges facing schools is the presence of mobile phones*”.

The guidance continues:

Mobile phones risk unnecessary distraction, disruption, and diversion. National statistics highlight that one in three secondary school pupils report that mobile phones are used in most lessons without permission. This not only distracts the single pupil using the phone, but disrupts the lesson for a whole class, and diverts teachers' efforts away from learning.

One in five pupils nationally have experienced bullying online and creating safe spaces where pupils are protected from the risks and dangers associated with social media and cyber-bullying is important to us at St. Mogue's.

We have been increasingly concerned that many of our young people are addicted to their mobile phones. We don't blame them for this, but we have a deep desire to support their wellbeing and to enable them to “*live life to the full*”.

We believe that this move will improve academic performance, reduce cyberbullying and increase mental health & wellbeing.

In light of the above, the question probably should be “*why haven't we done this sooner*”?

What happens each morning?

Students come to school and unlock their Yondr pouch (**NOTE: The pouch should remain closed when empty to avoid damaging the pin**) and put their mobile and any wearable technology in the pouch ensuring the phone is either off or on flight mode.

Students can unlock their pouches using an unlocking device mounted on the exterior of the school or by a handheld device by a member of staff.

As they enter the school building students will lock their Yondr and proceed into the building.

In the first class of the day as the teacher reads out the roll call, students hold up their pouch when their name is called.

Spot checks will be done in tutor time and also during the school day.

Please note that smart watches must be placed in the pouches each day.

What happens at the end of the day?

Students exit the building and can unlock their Yondr pouch using a wall mounted unlocking device or a handheld device.

What happens if a phone goes off in a lesson?

Staff will ask the student to go to reception to unlock the pouch, get the student to turn the phone off, lock it again and then hand it in at reception.

Students can collect the phone at the end of the day from reception. Repeat offenders may receive sanctions in line with school policies.

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

In order to maximise student learning, we think it is best that their phones are kept in their pouches. However, we do understand that sometimes there will be an urgent or important need for you to contact your child during the school day. If this is the case please ring 049 9523112 where you will have the opportunity to pass on your urgent message. Historically it was possible to flourish without a phone during the school day and we believe that still to be the case.

Who pays for the pouch which will last for their time at St. Mogue's?

Initially, the school will purchase a pouch for each child and students will be issued with one on the First of October 2024. From 2025/26, purchasing a pouch will be part of the school uniform policy should a child wish to bring a mobile to school. A payment will be required though for lost or damaged pouches.

What if the Yondr pouch gets damaged or a student is caught on their phone?

If a student damages their Pouch or is caught on their phone, staff will collect the phone/pouch and contact home in order that parents and carers are informed of the concern and breach of policy.

Depending on the context, the consequences are likely to be at least one of the following:

- a fixed term suspension in line with school policy and processes
- damaged pouches will be billed to parents and carers at a current cost of €30
- parents and carers may be invited to collect the phone

This list is not comprehensive, and the school reserves the right in exceptional circumstances to impose sanctions which it considers appropriate.

Note: Damage consists of any signs that the physical integrity of the pouch has been compromised whether intentional or unintentional, as determined by the school or Yondr staff.

What if I don't have a mobile phone?

Not a problem. We will get a pass for students to carry so staff are aware.

What if I need to go early for some reason?

The main office will have an unlocking device for students to access their mobiles when they leave site.

What if I'm late to school?

Similar to above, as you arrive and check in at reception the main office will let you unlock your pouch, watch you put your phone in and lock the pouch before you go to class.

What if my child needs the phone for medical reasons?

The very small number of students who need their phones for medical reasons (e.g. diabetes) will have a slightly different pouch that can be opened by the student without the use of the unlocking device.

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 lockers.

What if I forget my pouch?

Hopefully this won't happen. It's exceptionally rare for students to forget phones so we trust that remembering the pouch won't be difficult. We suggest that students leave the pouches in their school bags and pouches must stay in the locked position when not at school.

If a child does forget their pouch, they must hand their phone (and smart watch if applicable) in at reception in the morning for safe keeping. It will be locked away and returned to them at the end of the school day.

I've read online that you can break into the pouches. What happens if I do?

St.Mogue's are being issued with brand new 4th generation pouches from Yondr so this will mitigate the possibility of breaking into the pouches.

Very few things in this world are completely secure but should a child gain access to their pouch, as previously stated, sanctions will be issued in line with school policy and processes. In addition, if a child attempts to gain access and damages the pouch, they will be billed at a current cost of €30