# Hull’s Liberty Academy adopts holistic Yondr system to ban phones and boost student engagement



A secondary school in Hull, Liberty Academy, is set to become phone-free by adopting a system that uses lockable pouches to store students' digital devices during the school day. Run by the Heartwood Learning Trust, the initiative aims to help students focus more fully on their learning and build stronger, more genuine connections with their peers and staff, free from the distractions posed by mobile phones.

The system, developed by Yondr and founded in 2014, is already in use in around 45 countries worldwide and among millions of pupils, including more than 250,000 in the UK. Each student is assigned a personal Yondr pouch to securely store their phone in during school hours. Students keep the pouches in their bags or lockers and unlock them under staff supervision only at the start and end of the school day. This approach introduces a structured break of six to eight hours from digital interruptions, allowing students to engage more deeply in lessons.

According to the Heartwood Learning Trust, the transition to a phone-free environment is backed by research and practical experience showing significant benefits. A survey conducted jointly by Yondr and Public First in February 2025 found that 72% of teachers believe phone use is a persistent issue in schools and that lesson time is regularly disrupted by it. Moreover, 80% of parents support the idea of phone-free schools. These statistics align with findings from other Yondr-supported institutions that report improvements in safety, student wellbeing, engagement, and behaviour. For instance, 86% of school leaders involved in Yondr programmes have noted enhanced safety and wellbeing, 84% reported increased classroom engagement, and 44% witnessed a reduction in behavioural sanctions.

Helen Winn, Chief Executive Officer at Heartwood Learning Trust, emphasised the positive impact they anticipate: "We’ve seen how powerful it can be when students are free from digital distractions... Our staff will be able to focus fully on teaching and supporting students, with everyone engaged throughout the day." She highlighted the importance of Yondr’s long-standing expertise, which includes policy consultation, communications, operational planning, training, and ongoing support to ensure that this shift is smooth and sustained.

The Trust also stated that this move is part of a broader strategy to foster environments where students can thrive academically and socially while learning to develop balanced, healthy relationships with technology. This shift aims to reduce the stress and anxiety often associated with constant online connectivity, allowing students to benefit from a calmer and more focused school experience.

Yondr's phone-free programme has been widely acknowledged for its comprehensive approach, offering support that extends beyond simply providing equipment. This holistic strategy addresses policy development, school staff training, and ongoing programme evaluation, making the intervention more effective and accepted in educational settings.

As Liberty Academy and the other five secondary schools within the Heartwood Learning Trust implement this system, they join a growing number of schools internationally committing to reducing the disruption caused by mobile devices in educational settings. The goal is to create a more focused, safe, and supportive atmosphere that encourages student well-being and academic achievement.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/hull-secondary-school-going-phone-10583235)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/hull-secondary-school-going-phone-10583235), [[2]](https://www.overyondr.com/phone-free-schools), [[3]](https://www.overyondr.com/uk-schools)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/hull-secondary-school-going-phone-10583235)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/hull-secondary-school-going-phone-10583235), [[2]](https://www.overyondr.com/phone-free-schools), [[5]](https://www.overyondr.com/phone-free-schools)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/hull-secondary-school-going-phone-10583235)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/hull-secondary-school-going-phone-10583235), [[2]](https://www.overyondr.com/phone-free-schools), [[6]](https://www.overyondr.com/uk-schools)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/hull-secondary-school-going-phone-10583235), [[2]](https://www.overyondr.com/phone-free-schools), [[4]](https://www.overyondr.com/phone-free-schools-1)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/hull-east-yorkshire-news/hull-secondary-school-going-phone-10583235> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.overyondr.com/phone-free-schools> - Yondr has been implementing phone-free environments in schools since 2014, supporting millions of students across 48 countries. Their program includes policy consultation, operational planning, equipment, training, and ongoing support. The lockable pouches ensure students keep their phones but cannot access them during school hours, providing a 6-8 hour break from digital distractions. This approach has led to enhanced student engagement, improved classroom management, better staff retention, and increased safety and security.
3. <https://www.overyondr.com/uk-schools> - Yondr has been creating phone-free schools in the UK since 2014, supporting thousands of pupils daily. Their program offers policy consultation, operational planning, equipment, training, and ongoing support. The lockable pouches allow students to keep their phones but prevent access during school hours, providing a 6-8 hour break from digital distractions. This approach has resulted in enhanced student engagement, improved classroom management, better staff retention, and increased safety and security.
4. <https://www.overyondr.com/phone-free-schools-1> - Yondr has been creating phone-free spaces in schools since 2014, supporting millions of students across 35 countries. Their program includes policy consultation, operational planning, equipment, training, and ongoing support. The lockable pouches ensure students keep their phones but cannot access them during school hours, providing a 6-8 hour break from digital distractions. This approach has led to enhanced student engagement, improved classroom management, better staff retention, and increased safety and security.
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