



Distraction Free Learning FAQ

Terra Nova High School is committed to creating a distraction-free learning environment that supports academic focus, student engagement, and overall well-being. To support this effort:

- Personal devices (cell phones, airpods/earbuds/headphones, smartwatches, glasses, laptops, and tablets) are restricted during the school day.
- All students will use Yondr pouches to store phones and wearables.
- All students will access technology through district provided Chromebooks, as part of our 1:1 device program.

Why are you implementing this policy?

Over the past several years, we've heard from staff, families, and students that phones and other personal devices have become a growing distraction on campus and impeding learning. It has become harder to keep learning time focused and free from interruptions. We've also seen how constant access to social media, texting, and cameras can lead to conflicts and take a toll on student wellness.

Why don't you implement a zero-tolerance policy or use lockboxes in the classroom?

We've tried many approaches and classroom strategies, but they haven't solved the problem. Students often find ways around them, and when they don't comply, the burden falls on the teacher to enforce the rule which takes valuable time away from instruction. Our distraction-free initiative includes all personal devices, removes the constant temptation, and puts everyone—students and staff—on the same page from the start of the day.

What is a Yondr pouch? How does it work?

The Yondr pouch is a secure bag that is used to store an individual's cell phone or devices. It is secured and unlocked with a magnetic locking device. Every student will be assigned a personal Yondr pouch. Before entering their first class of the day, students will turn off or put their cell phone in Do Not Disturb mode and then place their cell phone, smartwatch, and Airpods/earbuds in their assigned Yondr pouch. At the end of the school day, students will visit one of the 8 unlocking bases around campus to unlock their pouch

Should phones be silenced or turned off before put into the pouch?

Phones should be placed on "Do Not Disturb" mode. We do not recommend turning off the phone or placing it on silence. Do Not Disturb mode allows the device to continue receiving messages without notifying the user with any vibrations or sounds. Do Not Disturb mode allows parents/guardians and others who use Find My Phone, Life 360, or other apps to monitor the location of their child. Airplane mode restricts this option.. Silent mode, unless changed in settings, will continue to vibrate. These vibrations are distracting and can be anxiety provoking for the user to be aware of new messages throughout the day without being able to access them.

Why can't I access my phone during brunch or lunch?

Unlocking pouches during brunch or lunch often leads to students using their devices in the halls on the way to class, requiring teachers and staff to spend time making sure devices are back in pouches and stored in backpacks. This takes away from valuable class time. Limiting personal device use during the school day also strengthens our campus community, supports student well-being, and fosters a more positive school climate.



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What happens in an emergency?

Unlocking bases have been installed in every classroom to be used in emergency situation. School staff will allow student access to personal devices at the appropriate time and when it is safe to do so. Portable devices are available to use during evacuations.

How do I get in touch with my child?

Students are able to receive emails on their district email account from family members and they can check their email account on their school issued Chromebook. Families can call the front office and ask for a note to be delivered to the student. Students can use an office phone to contact a parent. Messages can be sent to students' phones which they will receive after school ends for the day.

How does my coach get in touch with me about schedule changes?

Coaches and other after school staff can email students and use ParentSquare/StudentSquare to send updates to their school email address. Students have access to these platforms throughout the day on their district assigned device. Coaches, club advisors, and other after school staff can also send messages that will be seen after school when students open their Yondr pouches and have access to their phones.

How does my child monitor their health condition without a cell phone?

Students who require access to a phone to monitor or track a medical condition will be provided a pouch with a velcro opening.

How can my student access their accommodations without their phone?

Most common accommodations can be supported directly through the student's district-issued Chromebook. If your student has specific needs or you're unsure how their accommodations will be provided, please contact your student's case manager to discuss options in more detail.

Why do earbuds/air pods and smartwatches need to be pouched?

These devices can be used to send, receive, or listen to messages, calls, music, and other content that distracts from learning. While some smartwatches or fitness trackers do not have messaging capabilities, they often look very similar to those that do, making it difficult for staff to distinguish between them without inspecting the device. A consistent policy of pouching ensures all devices are stored and inaccessible, removing the potential for distraction.

What happens if I forget to unlock my pouch?

The unlocking base in front of the doors to the Main Office will be unlocked and accessible at all times.

What happens if I forget my pouch at home?

Students who forget their pouch at home will have their phone safely stored in the Main Office for the day.

Can students decorate their pouch?

No. In an effort to keep costs down, we will collect and reuse pouches.