



York Early College Academy

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Learning Today to Lead Tomorrow



YECA's Cell Phone & Personal Electronic Device Policy 2025-2026

YECA is committed to maintaining a safe and distraction-free learning environment that supports academic and social engagement. All YECA Scholars (Grades 6–12) are required to adhere to YECA's Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Device Policy ([Chancellor's Regulation A-413](#)) while present in the YECA building. *This is a new policy, effective this school year, from the New York State Education Department.*

Devices Include:

- Cell phones and smartphones
- Wireless/over-the-head headphones
- Smartwatches and Bluetooth devices
- Non-DOE issued laptops/tablets
- Gaming devices and portable music players



The time parameters of YECA's policy are "bell to bell" for the entire instructional day. As long as scholars' personal electronic device(s) are powered off and locked in a Yondr pouch, it can neither be seen nor heard, and therefore will not be confiscated during the school day. We strongly recommend that students keep their pouched electronic devices inside their backpacks throughout the school day.

In case of emergency or exigent circumstances:

- Students will have access to school phones to reach parents or guardians.
- Families can contact the main office directly at (718)262-8547 ext. 442.
- Students will be supported in reaching out to their family, when needed.
- GAMA will be used to communicate information to parents or guardians in case of emergency.

How do I access GAMA?

Parents can access GAMA through their NYCDOE Schools Account portal by visiting <https://www.schoolsaccount.nyc/>. If you don't have an NYCSA account, you'll need to create one using your child's OSIS/ID number and an account creation code, which you can obtain from our Parent Coordinator, Mrs. Perry at lperry5@schools.nyc.gov. If you have any questions about accessing GAMA, please reach out to Mrs. Perry.

Exception for 11th & 12th Grade YECA Scholars on the York College Campus



College scholars are exempt from pouching personal electronic devices when they are on the York College campus. *As per CR A-413 III A 1. Students can use devices if “authorized by the school principal/designee for a specific educational purpose.”*

Overview of Daily Process



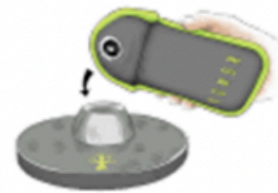
POUCH

As a student enters school, they place their phone in their assigned Yondr pouch.



SECURE

The pouch is closed and secured. Each student keeps their pouch throughout the day.



EXIT

When leaving school, the student taps their pouch to an unlocking base to release their phone.

Arrival Procedures (Auditorium from 7:30-8:00 am)



1. **Welcome!** Beginning at 7:30am, auditorium doors will open and scholars will line up on the left aisle.
2. **Morning “To-Dos”:** Scholars will go to Table #1: Electronics Table (Front left) to pouch their personal internet-enabled electronic devices and then move to Table #2: CASS machine (Front right) to swipe their ID cards at the CASS machine.
3. **Safely Securing Personal Electronic Devices:** At Table #1, YECA staff will help scholars securely store their personal electronic devices.
 - a. Staff members will check that devices are turned off and locked in a pouch.
 - b. Apple watches must be placed in the pouch with the phone.
 - c. Tablets will be confiscated and given to Dean Gross or SSD members.
4. **“Bell to Bell”:** Students will carry the pouch from “bell to bell” for the entire instructional day.

LATE Arrival Procedures (Lobby)



What if my scholar arrives after 8:00am? Students arriving after morning arrival will report to the YECA Staff Member stationed in the **lobby**. YECA staff will help scholars pouch their personal internet-enabled electronic devices and swipe on the CASS machine.

Dismissal Procedures (Exit 1 from 2:20-2:35)

END
OF THE
DAY

As students exit the school building for dismissal, YECA staff will unlock students' YONDR pouches. The YECA issued YONDR pouches will be returned to the school in the condition to which they were received by students.

- ***What if my scholar leaves before 2:20?*** A YECA staff member will unlock students' YONDR pouches in the *lobby*.
- ***What if my scholar takes the yellow bus?*** YECA staff will walk with the yellow bus students to the *auditorium*. YONDR pouches will be unlocked in the *auditorium*.
- ***What if my scholar participates in afterschool GRYC?*** GRYC students' phones will remain pouched through homework help and will be unlocked at snack time at 3:30pm by Dean Gross and the GRYC director.
- ***What if my scholar participates in afterschool Math and/or Reading Level Up?*** Phones will remain pouched during Level Up. At 3:20, GRYC students will report to GRYC. Non-GRYC Level Up students will go to the *main office* to unlock the pouches.

Damage to the Pouch (Destruction of School Property)

Yondr pouches will be checked everyday, upon return at dismissal. Any evidence of tampering with the lock or damage to the pouch (including pen marks, ripped pouch material, and/or bending or clamping of the pouch's needle) will result in the pouch and electronic device being confiscated.



Damage consists of any signs that the physical integrity of the pouch has been compromised, whether intentional or unintentional, as determined by YECA. This includes but is not limited to, rips, cuts, tears, inappropriate markings, bent or cut pin and/or evidence of force to the black button on the back or opened in any way other than prescribed by YECA. If the pouch is damaged: The student/their caregiver is responsible for purchasing a new Pouch (\$25).

What happens if a scholar damages the pouch?

- **1st Time**
 - Dean Gross will speak with the scholar and notify the parent/guardian.
 - The device will be placed in a pouch and given back to the scholar.
 - The scholar will receive **1 day** of lunch reflection.
- **2nd Time**
 - Dean Gross will speak with the scholar and notify the parent/guardian.
 - The device will be safely held in the dean's office and will be returned to the student at 2:30pm. *If the scholar cannot wait until 2:30pm, the device will be returned the following day.*
 - The scholar will receive **2 days** of lunch reflection.
- **3rd time and beyond:**
 - Dean Gross will speak with the scholar and notify the parent/guardian.
 - The device will be safely held in the dean's office until a parent/guardian, who is listed on the blue emergency card, comes to YECA to get the device. The scholar and parent must conference with the dean and an administrator.
 - The scholar will receive **3 days** of lunch reflection.
 - The scholar may not be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, school events or field trips.

Damage to Personal Electronic Device at School

What if my scholar's device was stolen or damaged at school?

If a scholar's personal electronic device is stolen or damaged at school, they must report this directly to Dean Gross. The dean will:

1. Notify the parent/guardian.
2. File an incident report (sometimes called an "OORS Report")
3. Notify the New York City Police Department (NYPD) if theft or other criminal activity is suspected
4. Investigate the allegations and take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the [NYCPS Discipline Code](#)

Policy Violation & Consequences

What if a student does not put their cell phone in a pouch or opens the pouch and is found with the phone in school?

- **1st Time**
 - Dean Gross will speak with the scholar and notify the parent/guardian.
 - The device will be placed in a pouch and given back to the scholar.
- **2nd Time**
 - Dean Gross will speak with the scholar and notify the parent/guardian.
 - The device will be safely held in the dean's office and will be returned to the student at 2:30pm. *If the scholar cannot wait until 2:30pm, the device will be returned the following day.*
- **3rd Time**
 - Dean Gross will speak with the scholar and notify the parent/guardian.
 - The device will be safely held in the dean's office until a parent/guardian, who is listed on the blue emergency card, comes to YECA to get the device.
 - The scholar will receive a lunch reflection.
- **4th Time & Beyond**
 - Dean Gross will speak with the scholar and notify the parent/guardian.
 - The device will be held in the dean's office until a parent/guardian, who is listed on the blue emergency card, comes to YECA to get the device.
 - The scholar will receive a lunch reflection.
 - The scholar may not be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, school events or field trips.

Electronic devices that are confiscated throughout the day will not be returned until a parent/guardian comes in to retrieve the device. Electronic devices will not be returned to individuals, family, or friends not listed on the student's emergency contact form/blue card. Items that were confiscated and are not picked up by the end of the school year are subject to donation. YECA is not responsible for replacing items that have been donated after being left and not picked up by the end of the school year.

Policy Exceptions (*As per Chancellor's Regulation A-413*)

A. Schools must authorize student use of personal internet-enabled electronic devices on school property during the school day under the following circumstances:

1. If authorized by the school principal/designee for a specific educational purpose;
2. Where necessary to monitor a medical condition and to notify the user of necessary action to be taken, for the management of a student's healthcare, as documented by the student's medical provider and subject to review by the Office of School Health;
3. On a case-by-case basis, after review and determination by a school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor, for a student caregiver who is routinely responsible for the care and wellbeing of a family member; and
4. Where required by law.

B. Schools may authorize student use of personal internet-enabled electronic devices on school property during the school day under the following circumstances:

1. In the event of an individual student emergency, where the parent has notified the principal/designee of the specific nature of the emergency.
2. For translation and interpretation services if other means of translation or interpretation are not available.

C. Students must be permitted to use personal internet-enabled electronic devices where such use is contained in an IEP or in a 504 plan, for (i) medical purpose; or (ii) an educational purpose, but the school has not yet secured a DOE-issued device for such purpose.

**** To request an exception, please email Dean Gross at mgross4@schools.nyc.gov. Your request will be reviewed and responded to within one week. Please note, you will be asked to provide documentation.***

Frequently Asked Questions

My child follows the current electronic device policy without fault. Why are they being punished (i.e. losing access to their electronic devices) because of the behaviors of others?

Limiting access to electronic devices during school hours should not be considered a punishment. In alignment with ongoing research and in response to the survey data recently collected by the leadership team, this change in policy is to help increase both academic and social engagement for your child at school. YECA is committed to maintaining a safe and distraction-free learning environment that supports academic and social engagement!

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

We want our scholars to be engaged in their learning; however, if a situation arises that cannot wait until school is dismissed, please contact the main office at (718)262-8547 ext. 442.

What if my child needs to reach me during the school day?

Students will have access to school phones to reach parents or guardians. Students will be supported in reaching out to their family, when needed.

What if there is an emergency?

In case of an emergency, student safety is our top priority. Students will be directly to safety by YECA staff members. GAMA will be used to communicate information to parents or guardians in case of an emergency. If you have any questions about accessing GAMA, please reach out to our Parent Coordinator, Mrs. Perry at lperry5@schools.nyc.gov.

Will my child's personal electronic device(s) be safe?

Scholars will retain possession of their electronic devices, securely encased within Yondr pouches, throughout the school day. We will encourage scholars to safely stow the pouches in their backpacks.

What about student athletes that leave early for a game?

Student-athletes will be able to unlock their electronic device in the main office or lobby prior to leaving campus.

What if a student refuses to put their device in their Yondr Pouch?

The dean will notify the parent/guardian. Students will be subject to disciplinary consequences as per NYCDOE Citywide Behavioral Expectations to Support Student Learning.

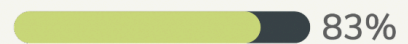
Can my scholar use their personal electronic device during lunch?

No. Personal electronic devices are to be pouched “bell to bell” for the entire instructional day. This means from arrival to dismissal.



MILLIONS OF STUDENTS USE YONDR EVERY DAY

We partner with thousands of schools across 35 countries.



Saw an improvement in
student engagement in
the classroom.



Saw an improvement in
student behavior.



Saw an improvement in
academic performance.