

Two Edinburgh schools to pilot phone-free policy using lockable pouches

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The schools will introduce lockable pouches for the devices in an attempt to curb distractions in class.

Two schools in Edinburgh are piloting a phone-free policy in what is said to be a Scottish first in an effort to improve focus and mental health among pupils.

Portobello High School and Queensferry High School in Edinburgh will introduce magnetic, lockable pouches for the devices in an attempt to curb distractions in class.

It is also hoped the pouches, created by US company Yondr, will improve pupils' moods, encourage less screentime, and increase face-to-face interaction.

Portobello will roll out the pouches across the campus on Wednesday, with Queensferry due to follow suit on Wednesday 14.

The magnetically-locked pouches with phones inside will remain in each pupil's possession, meaning they need not worry about losing their devices or leaving them in the hands of school staff.

All pupils from S1-S6 will be required to participate, and can access their devices back at the end of the school day by tapping the phone on one of the unlocking

bases in the school.

It comes after an extensive consultation period with parents and carers, with focus groups meeting to discuss the policy.

Research found that 86% of parents and carers at Portobello supported the introduction of the new policy.

Councillor Joan Griffiths, convener for education, children and families at Edinburgh City Council, said: "I'm pleased to see Edinburgh schools leading the way in introducing a mobile-phone free school environment.

"Mobile phones in classroom settings are increasingly competing with the teachers for learners' attention and limiting access to mobile phones during the school day is only a positive thing for our young people.

"I know that schools across Edinburgh, and indeed the country, are exploring ways to manage mobile phone use, including restricting phone use during the school day.

"The new pouches provide an innovative way for our young people to have distance from their devices while having the reassurance that they are still in their possession. We hope that this new policy will increase focus on learning, reduce classroom distractions and help improve wellbeing."

Source: [Christina O'Neill](#), STV News

Image: Photo by [Katerina Holmes](#)