



3rd July 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

Recent Events

A big thank you goes to everyone involved in our Enrichment Week for Years 7 to 9, Work Experience for Year 10 and our Futures Week for Year 12. I know that our students were able to get involved in such a wide range of activities including a group of Year 9 students visiting the World War I Battlefields of Belgium and France. Year 12 and 13 students were in the mountains of North Wales last weekend completing their Gold Duke of Edinburgh practice and assessed expeditions respectively.

The heat necessitated the school being closed along with others in the Lighthouse School Partnership. This meant that activities such as the Sixth Form formal event at Aldwick Court and the Sixth Form Induction Day needed to be cancelled which was a great shame. We did however celebrate coming to the end of the examination period with our Year 11 students at Cadbury House which was a lovely evening to take part in.

LAMDA is a speech qualification offered by the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art which a good number of our students take up the offer to be involved in and they last night had their presentation evening. Tonight we are looking forward to our Music Department's Summer Concert.

Social Media Ban for Under 16's and Future Protocol for Mobile Phones in School

I sat and listened to the Prime Minister announce the decision of the government to ban social media for all young people under 16. For those of us who have worked with this age group for some time, we have watched as mobile phones have seemed to have taken over with almost an expectation that these devices have become part of daily life.

I recently re-read the book *'The Anxious Generation'* by Jonathan Haidt. This looks at how the decline of what Haidt describes as free play, where young people are able to go out and experience the world and make mistakes, and the rise of smart phone use has changed our world. I read it both as an educationalist but also as the parent of a teenager who has a mobile phone and I would recommend this to anyone who has children of this age.

A good amount of pastoral time goes into working through cases of young people being inappropriate with their phones on social media, often during the evenings or at weekends whilst in their own homes, and at times this is where apps have been used that students are at times too young to be accessing.

At Chew Valley, we're committed to creating a learning environment whilst at school where every student can thrive. Our young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many exciting opportunities – but also academic, emotional and social challenges.

Yondr Pouches from September

Beginning in September 2026, we will launch the [Yondr Phone-Free Schools Programme](#). This isn't just about limiting screen time, it's about giving students the space to think deeply, engage meaningfully, and thrive in an environment designed for their growth. We are following two of the other secondary schools in Lighthouse Schools Partnership, Gordano and Backwell, into this as they have already got pouches in operation and we have spent time talking to their staff and students about how this has been implemented.

For over a decade, Yondr has supported schools in more than 40 countries to build healthier, more engaging school cultures. Their pouch-based program, combined with hands-on guidance and dedicated support, has led to powerful results:

- 86% reported improved safety and student wellness
- 84% saw increased engagement in class
- 44% reduced behavioural referrals

Each student will be assigned a Yondr pouch – a secure, lockable case for storing personal devices. Students are responsible for bringing their pouch to and from school each day and keeping it in good condition.

When students arrive at school, they power off all smart technology, including their mobile phones and smart watches, and place all devices in the pouch which is then placed in their bag or locker for the day. At various times students will be asked to have their pouches out and visible. At the end of the day, students unlock pouches at designated stations to retrieve their devices. This process is quick, simple, and will be supervised by staff as part of our daily routine.

With student safety as our top priority, we will follow our standard safety protocols in the event of an emergency. If you need to reach your child during the school day, please contact our main office.

We know that this work will take partnership and we're here at school to support a smooth transition for your family. If you do have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Warmer Weather Arrangements for Week Commencing 6th July

With warmer weather forecast for the week commencing Monday 6th July, we will be moving to our warmer weather uniform arrangements.

For the duration of the week, students may choose to wear either:

- **Full, correct PE kit**, or
- **Standard school uniform**
 - Shorts must be grey tailored school shorts **PE shorts must not be worn as part of school uniform**
 - School Jumpers and ties are not required and may be left at home if students wish to

Students may decide each day which option they prefer. However:

- **Students must wear PE kit on days when they have PE lessons**
- **Uniform and PE kit must not be mixed** (for example, school shirt with PE shorts is not permitted)

Supporting students in the warmer weather

Parents and carers are asked to support their child by ensuring they are prepared for the warmer conditions. This includes:

- Applying and bringing **sun lotion**
- Taking appropriate steps for **sun protection**
- Bringing a **refillable water bottle**

Students will be reminded to **refill their water bottles at appropriate times throughout the day** (not during lesson time).

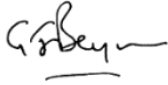
These arrangements will be in place for the entire week. **Friday 10th July is Sports Day and all students must wear PE kit on that day.** We will be in contact with further details of Sports Day next week.

Important Dates to Know

Our Academic year finishes on Wednesday 22nd July at 12.05pm.

The start of the new school year starts on Monday 7th September after two INSET days on Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th September. All year groups will be back at the same time.

With best wishes



Gareth Beynon
Headteacher

Frequently Asked Questions – Provided by Yondr

Morning and Afternoon Procedures

How quick is the unlocking process?

The unlocking process is quick and students typically don't need to break stride. While students are still getting used to how to unlock pouches, staff will be on hand with mobile unlocking stations to stop queues forming in the first few weeks. If needed we will add extra unlocking points.

What if my child arrives late or needs to be dismissed early?

The main office will have an unlocking device for students to monitor students arriving late or leaving early.

Will my child'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 safely in their backpacks. While the Yondr pouch will provide some protection, it's not a protective case, so students should continue to handle their phones with the same care they normally would to prevent damage.

What happens if a student forgets to open their pouch at the end of the day?

In Yondr's experience, this almost never happens. All students funnel past the unlocking stations at the exits and they typically want their phones back. If they do arrive home with a phone in a pouch, they can either come back to school to unlock it, or have a phone free evening!

What happens if a student forgets to bring in their pouch?

The student's phone will be collected and securely stored in the school office until the end of the day. Parents/ carers will be contacted and reminded of the procedures. If the pouch is repeatedly forgotten their pouch will be treated as lost and a replacement fee will be charged. We suggest that students leave the pouches in their school bags and pouches must stay in the locked position when not at school.

Daily Pouch Use

What if my child needs their phone for medical reasons?

We have an alternative solution for the small number of students who require their phones for medical reasons (e.g. diabetes). We will be in touch with these families if they have informed us of their medical condition. These students who need to use their phone at times in the school day for monitoring purposes will also receive a pouch however these will be able to be accessed in an appropriate manner whenever they need them.

What happens if a phone is seen outside of a pouch?

If a student is found in possession of a phone outside their pouch on school site the phone will be confiscated and returned when a parent/guardian picks it up from the school site. Bag searches may be conducted if staff have concerns that a student has a mobile phone on them that hasn't been placed into their pouch.

What if the Yondr pouch gets damaged?

Any attempt to tamper with the Yondr system, including use or possession of high-strength magnets will be treated as a serious offence, potentially resulting in a replacement fee, confiscation of their device until collected by a parent and suspension.

If accidental damage occurs, students must report it immediately. If damage is discovered during checks and has not been reported, it may be considered intentional. Students will be provided guidelines to lock their pouch when they leave school to avoid any accidental damage.

The pouch should not be used as a replacement for a protective case and/or screen protector on a mobile device.

We will be conducting random pouch/spot checks over the full academic year to assess the condition of pouches.

Emergencies

What if there is a school emergency?

In an emergency, the priority is for students to follow school safety procedures under staff guidance.

Unauthorised phone use during such situations may:

Delay emergency responses

Spread misinformation

Put students and staff at increased risk

Disrupt coordinated safeguarding measures

Emergency communications will be managed through the school.