



UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Home of the Golden Knights and Damsels"

354 Baker Street
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Mr. Andrew Carlson
High School Principal

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Subject: Phone Free School

Dear Parents and Guardians,

At Union School District, we're committed to creating a learning environment where every student can thrive—academically, socially, and emotionally. Over the past several years, cell phones and personal devices have led to increased distractions during the instructional day. Due to the increased distraction and its hindering of student learning, on July 16, 2026, the Union School District Board of Directors approved changes to the student handbook regarding cell phones and personal electronic devices. Additionally, at the time of writing, the Pennsylvania State Legislature is advancing a bill that would require PA schools to go phone-free, mirroring what other states have done nationwide. We feel that our action plan is a proactive approach to meet the requirements of the day and best serve our students.

Beginning the first day of school of the 2026-27 school year, we will launch the Yondr Phone-Free Schools Program—a proven, bell-to-bell approach that supports student focus, well-being, and connection by removing mobile phone distractions during the school day.

For over a decade, Yondr has helped schools across all 50 states and more than 35 countries build healthier, more engaging school cultures. Their pouch-based program, combined with hands-on guidance and dedicated support, has led to powerful results, which include:

- 86% reported improved safety and student wellness
- 84% saw increased engagement in class
- 68% experienced academic gain
- 44% reduced behavioral referrals

How the Program Works

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. If a student damages their Pouch or is caught on their phone, Administration will collect the phone/Pouch, provide disciplinary consequences, and call home for parent notification.

- **Upon arrival, students power off (or switch to airplane mode) their phones, place the devices in the pouch, and lock them.** Smartwatches and earbuds should also be placed in the pouch.
- **During the day,** Students keep the locked pouch in their backpack or locker.
- **At dismissal:** Students unlock pouches at designated stations to retrieve their devices. Reseal pouches after taking materials out.

This process is quick, simple, and will be supervised by staff as part of our daily routine. If the pouches are damaged, families will incur a \$30 replacement fee.

Medical Exceptions

Families requesting a medical exception must submit documentation to the school nurse by August 15, 2026. If you have questions, please contact Andrew Carlson, High School Principal

Staying Connected

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 the High School Office: 814-473-3121. We also encourage parents to maintain email communication with their child as needed.

We know that change takes partnership, and we're here to support a smooth transition for your family.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to create a focused, present, and positive school environment for every student.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Andrew Carlson
High School Principal
Union High School