



OUR MISSION IS STUDENT SUCCESS...ACADEMIC, ARTISTIC, AND HUMANISTIC

45 Prince Street at University, Rochester, NY 14607
Tele: (585) 242-7682 Fax: (585) 256-6580 www.sotarochester.org

March 2022

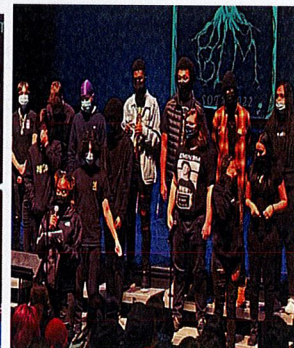
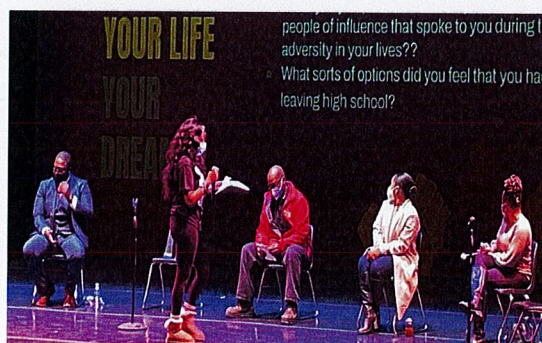
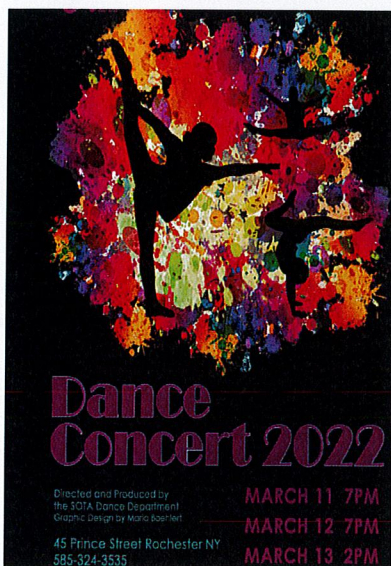


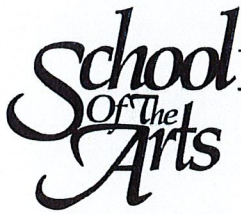
Masking- As of March 2nd 2022, masks are optional. Students can still wear approved face masks if they want to, but they are no longer required to. Full face masks are *not* permitted.

At Home Covid tests- If a student would like an additional at home test, please request one in the main office. Students are eligible to have weekly testing at school with Walgreens. Information on registering your child can be found at <https://www.rcsdk12.org/domain/14518>

Update your contact information- please make sure you let us know if you moved or changed your phone number. In the event of an emergency, we want to be able to reach you. Please call your child's house office or email sotainfo@rcsdk12.org to update your contact information.

Additional updates- on the next pages, you will see information about cell phone Yondr pouches, Social Media Usage and the RCSD Dress Code Policy. This information will allow you to stay up to date and informed.





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Online: sotarochester.org

Social: @rcsdsota

Dear SOTA Parent/Guardian,

School of the Arts is a phone-free environment that improves teaching and learning using a system called [Yondr](#). Yondr has been implemented in over 1,000 schools across 21 countries to facilitate an engaged learning environment.

We believe that phones have great utility. We have also found that learning and social behavior improve drastically when students are fully engaged with their teachers and classmates.

The Yondr Program utilizes a simple, secure pouch that stores a phone. Every student secures their phone in a personally assigned Yondr pouch when they arrive at school. Students maintain possession of their phones and do not use them until their pouches are opened at the end of the school day. Students are required to bring their Yondr pouch to and from school each day and are responsible for their pouch at all times.

Yondr recently surveyed over 900 school partners to measure the effects of creating phone-free educational environments. These schools achieved notable progress in multiple areas:

- **65% of schools saw an improvement in academic performance**
- **74% of schools saw an improvement in student behavior**
- **83% of schools saw an improvement in student engagement in the classroom**

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school via SOTAinfo@rcsdk12.org.

If there is an emergency and you would like to get in contact with your child, please reach out to your child's grade-level administrator at 585-242-7681.

In an effort to best serve your child, we appreciate your full support in adoption of the Yondr Program at our school.

Thank you,

Alan A. Tirré
Assistant Principal
School of the Arts



team@overyondr.com

How Yondr Works



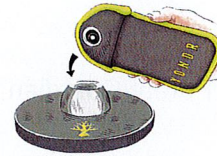
POUCH

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.

Frequently Asked Questions

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

We want our students to be engaged in their learning. If you need to contact your child during the school day, contact the main office at 585-242-7681.

What if there is a school emergency?

In case of a school emergency, we direct our students to safety first, following our school emergency preparedness protocol. Yondr provides schools with portable unlocking devices to assist in during a school crisis. SOTA/RCSD will launch communication via all media channels including ROBO-call parent alerts, email notifications, social media outlets, etc.

Will my student'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 in their backpacks where it is completely safe.

What if the Yondr pouch gets damaged or a student is caught on their phone?

The Yondr pouch is property of School of the Arts. If physical damage is made to the pouch in an attempt to circumvent its intended purpose, (Ex: bent pin or stripped lock inside the pouch, tampering or cutting seams), forgetting or losing the pouch, or using a phone during school hours, disciplinary action may be taken. Should a replacement pouch be needed, student will be required to pay \$20 for a replacement.

Note: Damage consists of any signs that the physical integrity of the pouch has been compromised, whether intentional or unintentional, as determined by the school or Yondr staff.



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CELL PHONE PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

To put the focus on academic achievement, minimize school-time distractions, and encourage positive communication, cell phones are not to be used during school hours. At the beginning of the school year, every student is assigned a personal Yondr Pouch similar to being assigned a textbook. While the Yondr Pouch is considered school property, it is each student's responsibility to bring their pouch with them to school every day.

CELL PHONE PROCEDURES

Building Entrance: As students enter the building, they will:

- Turn their phone off.
- Unlock their empty Yondr Pouch using an unlocking base at specified entrance(s).
- Place their phone inside the pouch, securely close it and store in their backpack.

Each student will maintain possession of their cellphone inside their Yondr Pouch for the duration of the school day. Students arriving after 8:25 AM will use the Main Entrance and follow this process at the security desk upon entry.

Building Exit: As students exit the building at the end of the school day, they will:

- Unlock their pouch using an unlocking base at a building exit(s).
- Remove their phone from their pouch. Securely close their empty pouch and place it in their backpack for the next day.

Please Note: Students with an early dismissal will unlock their pouch at the security desk.

GENERAL PRACTICE

Students who choose not to follow the process upon entering the building will result in a call to the parent/guardian. Parent/guardian will be informed that their student failed to adhere to the procedure, and may not enter the building. The student will then be subject to disciplinary action as outlined below.

CONSEQUENCES

- **First Time Offense:** parent/guardian will be contacted, and the student will be assigned to C.A.R.E. for periods 1-4 of the following day. The cell phone will remain with administration for the balance of the day, to be returned to the student at the end of the school day.
- **Second Time Offense:** parent/guardian will be contacted, and the student will be subject to progressive discipline through in-school suspension (ISS). The cell phone will remain with administration, and may only be picked-up by the parent/guardian.

Please Note: If physical damage is made to the pouch in an attempt to circumvent its intended purpose, (Ex: bent pin or stripped lock inside the pouch, tampering or cutting seams), forgetting or losing the pouch, or using a phone during school hours, disciplinary action may be taken. Should a replacement pouch be needed, student will be required to pay \$20 for a replacement.

C.A.R.E. stands for **Creating and Restoring/Relationships Effectively. This program is a component of SOTA's Restorative Practices, and is an alternative to suspension. During this time, students have the opportunity to interact with teachers, counselors, administration, and other staff to support them in making better decisions. Academic work is provided to students during this placement.*

WE ARE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS!

DRESS CODE

Rationale

A dress code and its implementation impact both the constitutional rights of students and the responsibilities of school officials to maintain an environment conducive to learning. As such, the purpose of this dress code is to strike a positive balance between a student's right to free expression and the educational mission of the district.

Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Teachers and all other District personnel should, at a minimum, adhere to the dress code, as well as exemplify acceptable dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

Clothing, accessories or appearance that run contrary to the district's educational mission, cause a material or substantial disruption of the educational process, or infringe upon the rights or safety of others, can be regulated.

It is important to note that mere dislike or offense is not sufficient grounds to restrict speech or expression, including dress or appearance. All such restrictions must stem from something greater than personal preference, beliefs or taste. This means that to be lawfully regulated, the attire or garb must truly be a substantial or material interruption, infringe upon the legitimate rights or safety of others, or be contrary to the school's educational mission.

This dress code applies to both students and adults any time they are on District property, including the school buildings and Central Office, and whenever they are attending any school function, wherever located.

Standards

All persons are expected to give proper attention to personal hygiene and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. When on school property or at a school function, a person's dress, grooming and appearance, including jewelry, make-up and nails, must:

- Cover buttocks, stomach/midriff and chest.
- Not include clothing, headgear or jewelry that is associated with or identifiable as a symbol of gang membership.
- Be void of abusive, suggestive or profane language; symbols of illegal substances; or any other words, symbols or slogans that disrupt the learning environment or deny dignity or respect to others.
- Include shoes, which are to be worn at all times for health and safety reasons.



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Dear Families,

As we begin the second half of the 2021-22 school year, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and partnership.

We all know that social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.) plays a significant role in our world today, and we are continually being challenged to help our students use it in a safe and respectful way. The Rochester City School District is committed to keeping our children safe, which includes promoting the responsible use of the Internet.

Over the last several years, the RCSD has had to address many challenges as the result of social networking, especially by our teen students. As the popularity of social media grows, we are seeing it affect our elementary students too. With the frequency of these issues increasing, we are concerned about educational distractions and the social and emotional well-being of all our students.

Our school is spending a significant amount of time mediating, counseling, and investigating issues that involve social media activity, resulting in the loss of instructional time. I am asking for your cooperation and support. If your children use social media, please monitor their activity. Too often misunderstandings between two individuals end up involving everyone in their social circles. Please talk to your child about safe and appropriate online behavior. Encourage them to reach out to a trusted adult if they need help navigating the issues that can arise on social media.

The School of the Arts community is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment conducive to learning. If you have any questions or concerns about the use of social media, please do not hesitate to call me at 585- 242-7682.

Sincerely,

Kelly Nicastro

Kelly Nicastro
Principal

Think before you post ...

T	Is it <u>t</u> true?
H	Is it <u>h</u>elpful?
I	It is <u>i</u>nspired?
N	Is it <u>n</u>ecessary?
K	It is <u>k</u>ind?