



GEMS Winchester School Dubai



Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy Whole School

Person Responsible: Principal/CEO & Vice Principal

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Rationale and Purpose

GEMS Winchester School Dubai (WSD) uses instructional technology as one way of enhancing our mission to impart knowledge, understanding and skills that our students will need as responsible citizens in the 21st Century global community. Furthermore, our students learn collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking in a variety of ways throughout the school day. In an effort to increase access to such knowledge, understanding and skills, WSD will allow personal devices to be brought to school.

The Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program, which encourages students to bring their devices on a regular basis to school, has been initiated **only** for students who follow the responsibilities stated in this Policy. The purpose of this BYOD policy is to ensure that all students use technology at school, home and elsewhere effectively, safely and responsibly.

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Coverage

The Policy provides guidelines for using digital hardware and software on school and personal computers/devices, on local area networks, wide area networks, wireless networks, the internet and other technological equipment such as printers, servers, Smart TVs, projectors, etc. when students are at school.

The policy also applies to the students' use of all such devices outside of school.

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School Responsibilities

The school is responsible for:

- Providing technological hardware/ software/ network access to promote teaching and learning within the school community
- Maintaining the integrity, operation, and availability of its electronic systems for access and use
- Providing a safe cyber environment for all users through firewalls and Mobile Device Management (MDMs)

The school does not guarantee user privacy or system reliability.

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User Rights and Responsibilities

It is expected that all users of the network, digital resources will:

- Obey the laws and restrictions of the United Arab Emirates
- Respect other users in the school community, which includes the strict prohibition of cyberbullying and harassment
- Always use your own login account and password and not through any other individual's
- Do not disrupt, delete and tamper with someone else's work that is saved on school devices and network
- Recognise and honour the intellectual property of others
- Comply with legal restrictions regarding plagiarism, the use and citation of information resources and copyright law

- Limit the use of the school's technology resources to the educational vision and mission of the school
- Use non-curriculum relevant materials only in their own time, outside of school and without detriment to their studies
- Help maintain the integrity of the school network and equipment
- Not tamper or experiment with the school network or equipment, including efforts to bypass the school's Internet filters or proxies or the MDM system
- Make personal devices available for inspection by an administrator or other staff member upon request
- Use appropriate language in all communications
- Never use or attempt to use another student's assigned hardware, subscriptions, logins, files, or personal information
- Not give out personal information, such as name, address, photo, or other identifying information online, including username and password as this is prohibited
- Not use personal devices or equipment to record (audio/visual) others without their permission, as this is prohibited
- Not modify or copy any protected system files, system folders, or control panel files without prior approval of the School's IT Department
- Not install any software that will compromise on the safety and security of the system such as VPNs, as this is prohibited
- Use the internet for educational and administrative purposes only. Use of the internet for emails and social networking sites is for only educational needs
- Inform the IT team before installing any software on the school devices
- Use only licensed software for educational purposes
- Handle devices with care and be responsible for any loss or damage to individual devices
- Report any problems with the school equipment to the IT department

Users are not expected to:

- Store commercial software, music, games or any hidden files and folders on their devices
- Communicate between students and parents during school time - in case of emergency parents should contact the school
- Store parents' files and folders on their devices
- Play games in school
- Download unlicensed software
- Repair, reconfigure, modify or attach any external devices to existing hardware without the permission of the IT department
- Infringe or violate UAE or international copyright laws or restrictions

We encourage all parents to regularly review their child's device to ensure it is being used appropriately and safely. This includes:

- Ensuring that the device is updated and charged before arriving to school
- Checking for all school supported and recommended apps
- Checking for any unauthorised or unsuitable downloaded apps
- Checking for social media platforms, streaming services, or entertainment apps (e.g., Netflix) on student devices
- Checking for non-educational games (e.g., Roblox, Fortnite) on student devices
- Reviewing browser search history and website access
- Ensuring VPNs or bypass tools are not installed
- Discussing safe and responsible online behaviour with your child

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Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.

Students will be held accountable for cyberbullying, even if it occurs off-campus during the school year and negatively impacts the academic environment of GEMS Winchester School. GEMS Winchester School has zero tolerance for bullying, including cyberbullying, and will take appropriate action against any member of school community who engages in such behaviour in line with our Behaviour Policy, and/or our Anti-Bullying Policy.

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Permitted Devices and Mobile Phones

In the Primary School, students are encouraged to use a tablet, pre-loaded with the applications highlighted in the book list shared at the start of each academic year. It is expected this tablet will come to school each day and the teacher will make decisions on when this will be used to enhance learning.

In the Secondary School, students are encouraged to use a device that has a physical keyboard; this is ideally a laptop, but could be a tablet with an attachable keyboard. Given the periods of extended writing that might be required for Controlled Assessment and/or Coursework, a keyboard is a helpful tool for students to have.

Mobile phones should not be seen or used by any student during the school day; they should not be used as a device for learning. This is in accordance with the updated guidance from the Ministry of Education in September 2025.

All students who bring a mobile phone to school are expected to keep their mobile device in a **mobile phone pouch**; these will be made available for all families to purchase from the school at a cost of 70 AED per pouch. As students arrive at school, they are expected to place their phone in their pouch and use the magnetic clip to lock the pouch. Students should then keep their pouch in their school bag throughout their time at school. At the end of the day, students can use the magnetic 'unlocker' to open their pouch and access their phone as shown in the diagram below:



The magnetic 'unlocker' will be available for students to access in the bus bay, outside the school internal gates at the front of the school and near the auditorium exit, as well as main reception; these areas are not accessible to students during the day but are accessible once students leave the school site. Furthermore, in emergency situations, all Senior Leadership Team members will have a magnetic 'unlocker' for students to open their pouch.

For those students who rely upon using Apple or Samsung pay to purchase food, we can no longer allow this to continue. Students may use cash or debit, credit or pre-paid physical cards to make payment when the canteen trolley visits their classroom or students visit staggered canteen areas.

Alongside our expectation that all students will use a mobile phone pouch, the following rules apply regarding phones:

- Phones must not be seen or used for any purpose during the school day. Students should use their planner to check their timetable and read the clocks or their wristwatch to find the time.
- Phones must be on silent or switched off and all alarms and notifications must be silenced prior to the phone being placed in their mobile phone pouch
- Any member of staff may confiscate a mobile phone that is seen on the school site that is not in a mobile phone pouch
- If a phone is confiscated, only a parent will be able to collect the confiscated phone at the end of the school day. The phone will be kept safely on the school site until the parent has collected the device
- Phones will be taken to the Reflection Room and named with a post it note and locked in the safe drawer
- Phones may be collected by a parent between 3pm and 4pm Monday to Thursday, and between 11.30am-12.30pm on Friday
- The Reflection Room supervisor will ask student/parent to 'unlock' the phone before taking it
- GEMS Winchester School Dubai is not responsible for any loss or damage to mobile phones and devices that are brought into school
- GEMS Winchester School Dubai and its staff reserve the right to take legal action against students who use their phones illegally, for example by taking and/or sharing photographs or making recordings of others without their consent

Furthermore, headphones (including air pods) should not be seen or used by any student during the school day unless they are directed to do so by a teacher. All headphones should also be placed into the student's mobile phone pouch.

As many students use their phone and headphones on the school buses to make contact with family and to listen to music, we have agreed that mobile phones and headphones may be used on STS transport as long as they do not disturb other passengers. Furthermore, students who use their phone to book a taxi at the end of the school day can do so, but once they have left the school building and have used a magnetic unlocker.

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Non-Compliance with this Policy

It is expected that all users of the school network, technological devices and digital resources follow the guidelines mentioned in this policy at all times and anywhere in the school. Users risk the loss of digital privileges in case it is found that the guidelines are not being followed.

In cases of serious breaches, further action may be taken, in line with the school Behaviour Policy.

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Lost, Stolen or Damaged Devices

Each user is responsible for his/her own device and should use it responsibly and appropriately. GEMS Winchester School Dubai takes no responsibility for stolen, lost, or damaged devices, including lost or corrupted

data on those devices. While school employees will help students identify how to keep personal devices secure, students will have the final responsibility for securing their personal devices. Please check with your homeowner's policy regarding coverage of personal electronic devices, as many insurance policies can cover loss or damage.

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