



GEMS Winchester School Dubai



Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy Whole School

Person Responsible: ELT

Approved by ELT: August 2026

Date of Next Review: August 2027

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1. Rationale and Purpose

GEMS Winchester School Dubai (WSD) uses instructional technology to enhance our mission to impart the knowledge, understanding, and skills our students 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. To increase access to this knowledge, understanding, and skills, WSD will allow students to bring personal devices to school.

The Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program, which encourages students to bring their devices to school regularly, 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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2. 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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3. 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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4. User Rights and Responsibilities

It is expected that all users of the network:

- 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, or tamper with someone else's work saved on school devices and networks.
- Recognise and honour others' intellectual property.

- 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 school's educational vision and mission.
- 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.
- Do not tamper with or experiment with the school network or equipment, including efforts to bypass the school's Internet filters, proxies, or the MDM system.
- Do not install, access or use a Virtual Private Network (VPN), proxy service or any other tool intended to bypass the school's filtering, monitoring or security systems. VPNs are strictly prohibited on all personal and school-owned devices while connected to the WSD network. The use of technology to access content or services restricted under UAE law is also strictly prohibited.
- 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.
- Do not share personal information, such as your name, address, photo, or other identifying information online, including your username and password, as this is prohibited.
- Do not use personal devices or equipment to record (audio/visual) others without their permission, as this is prohibited.
- Do not modify or copy any protected system files, system folders, or control panel files without prior approval of the School's IT Department.
- Do not install any software that will compromise the safety and security of the system, such as VPNs, as this is prohibited.
- Use the internet only for educational and administrative purposes.
- Do not use the internet to access social media sites, including WhatsApp, LinkedIn, etc.
- 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

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5. Parent Responsibilities

Parents are expected to monitor their child's device regularly to ensure that it is used safely, responsibly and in accordance with this policy. This includes:

- Ensuring the device is fully charged, updated and ready for learning before arriving at school.
- Ensuring all school-approved and required applications are installed and functioning correctly.
- Checking for and removing any unauthorised, age-inappropriate or unsuitable applications.
- Ensuring that social media platforms, streaming services and entertainment applications, such as Netflix, are not accessed during the school day.
- Ensuring that non-educational games are not accessed during the school day.
- Reviewing browser history and website access regularly.
- Ensuring that VPNs, proxy services or other tools designed to bypass the school's filtering, monitoring or security systems are not installed or used.
- Discussing safe, respectful and responsible online behaviour with their child.
- Reinforcing the importance of protecting passwords and personal information.
- Reporting any online safety or safeguarding concerns to the school promptly.

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6. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place through digital technologies, including social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile devices. It is repeated behaviour intended to scare, anger, shame, threaten or otherwise harm another person. This may include spreading false information; sharing embarrassing photographs or videos; sending hurtful, abusive or threatening messages; impersonating another person or using fake accounts; excluding others from online groups; or using digital and generative AI tools to harass, humiliate or bully.

Cyberbullying may occur alongside face-to-face bullying and can leave a digital record. Students who experience or witness cyberbullying should not respond or retaliate. They should preserve relevant evidence, such as messages and screenshots, block or report the account where appropriate, and speak to a parent, teacher or another trusted adult as soon as possible.

GEMS Winchester School does not tolerate bullying in any form, including cyberbullying. Students may be held accountable for online behaviour that occurs on or off the school site where it involves members of the school community or affects a student's safety, wellbeing, relationships or access to learning. All concerns will be investigated and addressed appropriately in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and safeguarding procedures. Support will be provided to affected students, and appropriate action will be taken to stop the behaviour, address the harm caused and prevent recurrence.

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7. Permitted Devices and Mobile Phones

Student Devices

In the Primary School, students should bring a tablet, such as an iPad or similar device, pre-loaded with the applications identified in the book list shared at the beginning of each academic year. Students should bring the device to school fully charged each day. Teachers will decide when to use technology to enhance teaching and learning.

In the Secondary School, students should bring a laptop with a physical keyboard. If this is not possible, students may use a tablet with an attached physical keyboard. A keyboard is important because students may be required to complete extended writing as part of classwork, controlled assessments, and coursework.

Mobile Phones

In line with Ministry of Education and KHDA guidance, mobile phones are not permitted for student use at WSD and should not be brought to school.

Where a student must bring a mobile phone for use when travelling to or from school, the following expectations apply:

- The phone must be switched off before the student enters the school premises.
- The phone must remain switched off and stored securely inside the student's school bag throughout the school day.
- The phone must not be switched on or used until the student has left the WSD premises.
- Mobile phones must not be used as learning devices or for checking timetables or the time. Students should use their planner, the school clocks or a wristwatch.
- Any mobile phone seen, heard, or used on the school premises may be confiscated by a member of staff.
- Staff will label confiscated phones and store them securely in the Reflection Room.
- Only a parent or guardian may collect a confiscated phone.
- Parents or guardians may collect phones between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Thursday and between 11:30 a.m. and 12:00 on Friday.
- Students must not use a mobile phone to photograph, film or record another person without permission. Any such incident will be addressed in accordance with the school's Behaviour, Safeguarding and BYOD policies and may be referred to the relevant authorities where appropriate.
- Students must not use mobile phones to book taxis while on the WSD premises. If they need support with transport arrangements, students must speak to a member of staff.
- GEMS Winchester School Dubai accepts no responsibility for the loss of, or damage to, any mobile phone brought onto the school premises.

Canteen Payments

As mobile phones must remain switched off and stored away, Apple Pay, Samsung Pay and other mobile-payment services cannot be used at the school canteens. Students who wish to make a purchase must use cash or a physical debit, credit or prepaid card.

Headphones

Headphones, including AirPods and other wireless earbuds, must not be seen or used during the school day unless a teacher has specifically directed their use for an educational activity. When not in authorised use, headphones must remain stored securely inside the student's school bag.

Students travelling on STS transport may switch on and use their mobile phones or headphones only after the bus has left the WSD premises. Their use must not disturb other passengers and remains subject to STS expectations.

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8. Non-Compliance with this Policy

All users of the school network, technological devices, and digital resources are expected to follow the guidelines in this policy at all times and anywhere in the school. Users risk losing digital privileges if it is found that they are not following the guidelines.

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

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9. Lost, Stolen or Damaged Devices

Each user is responsible for their 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 learn how to keep personal devices secure, students are ultimately responsible for securing their personal devices. Please check your homeowner's policy for coverage of personal electronic devices, as many policies cover loss or damage.

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