



مدرسة جيمس وينشستر
GEMS Winchester School
FUJAIRAH

WSF Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy



28/04/21

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Introduction

Our BYOD initiative begins in August 2021. BYOD refers to a situation where each learner brings their own device to school each day. We have made the decision to implement the initiative to take advantage of technology to support teaching and learning at WSF. Throughout the pandemic, we have seen how technology provides access to tools and techniques that allow teachers to design innovative lessons that facilitate new ways of learning. We have also seen how students have adapted and used increasingly creative ways of learning, and, importantly, sharing, what they learn, with teachers, parents and their peers, digitally. The BYOD initiative will build on these developments to allow us to continue to provide a first class, 21st century personalised learning experience at WSF.

The effectiveness of BYOD initiatives is supported by a significant body of evidence. Song (2014), in his study, investigated students' perceptions of learning through participation in a BYOD Science inquiry program. His findings support claims that BYOD practices contribute directly to student engagement and support learning through student-centred inquiry approaches.

Clark (2013) describes the benefits for students in schools of engaging in BYOD practices in terms of creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, confidence, citizenship, and community. These are among the skills identified by OECD (2018) in their report, 'The future of education and skills: Education 2030.'. This highlights the importance of using technology in schools to support the development of the skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly globalized and digital world.

In a study focused on BYOD in a secondary setting, Parsons and Adhkar (2016) confirmed that the results of their research were positive, noting the improvement in the digital skills of students and teachers, increases in opportunity for individual mobile communications and collaboration for learning activities and the advancement in social and personal development of students.



A Phased Approach

The benefits of technology enhanced learning are age dependent. Children in each grade use technology differently and the way technology supports teaching, learning and the delivery of the curriculum differs too. A one size fits all approach does not work. We have therefore identified the following phases of our BYOD initiative:

Kindergarten

- Kindergarten is **not included** in the BYOD initiative
- Kindergarten children **are not required** to bring a device to school
- A small number of tablets will be located in each classroom to support the development of digital skills and citizenship

Grades 1 & 2

- BYOD is **not compulsory** for these grades
- We **strongly recommend** children in these grades bring a device into school
- Children that do not bring a device will not be disadvantaged in terms of their learning

Grades 3 – 12

- BYOD is **strongly recommended** for children in these grades
- We recommend that **every child** will bring a device from our approved device list to school every day
- If your child does not bring a device into school, their education will not be compromised. Teachers will provide alternative, not technology-based learning activities.
- Please note that the school has a limited number of loan devices. These are primarily for those families with devices under repair or when a child forgets their device.

Device Choice

Tablet

Tablets are often been perceived as gaming devices or a screen to watch videos on. This is a misconception. As they have become increasingly powerful, they can now perform all of the tasks traditionally associated with a desktop or laptop PC, just as well. The reality is they are far



more capable than a desktop or laptop due to their mobility and weight. Tablets, when paired with a keyboard cover and stylus, provide multiple ways of interacting with the device and open up many possibilities for the creative use of technology for learning.

Laptop

Laptops have been the device of choice for schools for some time. Many BYOD programmes were designed with laptops in mind. The keyboard is the primary means of input so when technology integration focused on keyboarding and word-processing skills, they were the obvious choice. However, as pedagogy has evolved, technology integration improved, and hardware evolved, the keyboard has become less important, rendering the laptop less useful. They are heavier devices making them less mobile, particularly in the hands of younger learners.

Our Recommendation

We recommend the following device choices based on current trends in top schools, as well as our own experience:

- **Grades 1 to 8** – tablets, keyboard cover, stylus
- **Grade 9 onwards** – tablet, keyboard cover, stylus or laptop

General Device Requirements

To be able to guarantee performance, reliability and compatibility, all devices **must** meet these minimum requirements:

- Less than 2 years old
- 4GB RAM laptops/2GB RAM tablets
- 256GB storage laptops/128GB storage tablets
- 13" screen laptops/9.7" screen tablets
- Bag or sleeve laptops/keyboard cover tablets

[Appendix 1](#) contains a list of devices we strongly recommend.

We do not recommend devices with LTE/cellular connections. We cannot secure data connections provided by a 3rd party.



Due to network security policies, each learner can register a maximum of two devices to be used in school. One must be their primary device; another can be a back-up device. Unregistered devices and devices already registered by a sibling in school cannot be used.



What to Expect in the Classroom

Well planned lessons use technology as an additional, not the only, learning resource. It is rare for any classroom based learning activity to require everyone to be on their devices all at the same time. It is far more common for activities to be planned where technology becomes a tool that can bring something new to the learning experience. That might be to create something original, such as a video or presentation, or to share new understanding beyond the classroom via a post on class blog. Equally, it might be as a portal to the Internet to carry out research and learn more about something the child is passionate about.

In a classroom where technology is seamlessly integrated, devices are sometimes shared. This adds a social element to the classroom that can motivate children to learn to collaborate and work more effectively within a group. It may also be the case that a laptop or tablet is used for a part of a learning activity, and when not being used is put away. Technology should be a tool, not the lesson itself, and how it is used from grade to grade, or subject to subject, will differ greatly. Similarly, technology integration between teachers will often be different as each selects tools and approaches that are specific to their learners and based on a unique knowledge of the curriculum and the individual needs of the children in their class.

The School's Commitment

Implementing a successful BYOD initiative involves the whole school community. In order to guarantee its success, WSF will:

Continue to Provide Staff Training

WSF teachers are lifelong learners. We have a comprehensive professional learning programme to keep all teachers at the cutting edge of pedagogy. This also applies to technology integration in the classroom. As our BYOD initiative matures, we will continue to provide opportunities for all WSF teachers to learn the latest approaches to technology enhanced teaching and learning.

Invest in Infrastructure

We have an enterprise level IT infrastructure in school to enable us to provide a fast, reliable and secure connection to our network. We have full Wi-Fi coverage of the building and outdoor areas to enable teaching and learning to extend beyond our classrooms. We constantly



evaluate the performance of our infrastructure to ensure it is fit for purpose and have renewal process to keep it up-to-date.

Provide Safe Internet Connectivity

We have full control over our Internet connection filtering. Our filters are reliable and prevent access to all known unsuitable content. We have the ability to restrict access to content the moment it is reported to our IT technicians. Our filtering, combined with the emphasis we place on effective Digital Citizenship across the school, means we provide a safe online experience for all learners.

Maintain Expert Onsite Technical Staff with Corporate Support

We have a dedicated IT team on site to provide proactive first line support for all users. They have the added advantage of direct access to GEMS' corporate IT department.

Please note, we do not provide hardware repairs.

Teach an Effective Digital Citizenship Curriculum

As a community, Digital Citizenship is always at the forefront of our minds. It's our collective duty to ensure that every child has the knowledge, skills, and understanding to exercise good judgment when interacting with the online world. We will continue our focus on Digital Citizenship

Our Pledge

WSF will engage in the planned, intentional use of technology to redefine learning opportunities for all learners. Technology will not be overused, its use will be measured and effective.



The Learner's Responsibility

Agree to and Abide by the Responsible Use Policy (RUP)

We have a comprehensive RUP for each group of users (KG/Primary, Secondary, Staff) and we expect everyone to read and agree to them. It is our expectation that every learner engages in positive online behaviors at all times. Failure to meet our high standards of engagement with technology and the Internet can result in loss of access and in serious cases, further sanctions as deemed necessary by the Principal.

[Appendix 3 contains links to the RUPs.](#)

When a learner does bring a device into school, it must be used for learning, as directed by the classroom teacher. Gaming is not permitted. Access to social media is restricted.

App Stores and Apps

We have list of essential apps for Grades 1 and 2, Grades 3 to 5, and Secondary. We expect devices to come to school preloaded with these apps. They are all free. Please see the list in Appendix 2. This app list covers Android and iOS devices. If the BYOD device is a laptop, we have a list of web based alternatives that the teacher will share in lessons. However, the Microsoft Store in Windows 10 contains Windows compatible versions of many mobile apps, for example Microsoft's Office 365.

From time-to-time a specific lesson or unit of work may require an additional app(s). The teacher will communicate this to learners and their parents well in advanced. Where possible teachers will use free apps However, on occasion a premium, paid for app may be required.

More about Apps

We advise all parents to add a Google Play or iOS App Store account to their child's devices that is **not linked to a payment card**. This is to prevent any app purchases taking place without their approval.

Regularly check for app updates. This is to make sure your child has access to the latest features and so the app remains reliable.



We strongly **discourage the installation of games** on learning devices. We do not allow gaming in school and the presence of games will cause distractions and interrupt your child's learning.

Damage & Theft

As per the RUP, learners are expected to treat their devices with care at all times. They must be stored in the designed areas in classrooms when not in use and they cannot be used in other areas of the school.

We recommend that parents have 3rd party insurance cover for their child's device which includes accidental damage. The school cannot be held responsible for any damage caused by misuse or mistreatment of a device.

Cameras & Cellular (data) Connections

Whilst we acknowledge that all new tablets, and most laptops, come equipped with cameras, they must only be used under direct instruction by a teacher and for specific learning activities. The use of images and video in school facilitates innovative ways of sharing learning and understanding but an individual's right to privacy is of paramount importance. Anyone learner taking photographs or video without permission will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in line with the school's behavior policy.

The school's internet filtering system makes internet access within school safe and secure. We cannot secure cellular (data) connections. **Therefore, we do not permit devices on campus with active cellular (data) connections.** This includes tablets, phones and laptops. All devices must connect to our Wi-Fi only, when in school.

Questions

If you have any questions about this policy, or our approach to technology integration, please contact:

Lee Wilson



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References

Falloon, Garry. "What's the difference? Learning collaboratively using iPads in conventional classrooms." *Computers & education* 84 (2015): 62-77.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). "The future of education and skills: Education 2030." *OECD Education Working Papers* (2018).

Parsons, David, and Janak Adhikar. "Bring Your Own Device to Secondary School: The Perceptions of Teachers, Students and Parents." *Electronic Journal of E-learning* 14.1 (2016): 66-80.

Song, Yanjie. "'Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)' for seamless science inquiry in a primary school." *Computers & Education* 74 (2014): 50-60.



Appendix 1: Recommended Devices



BYOD Device Options

These are our recommended devices and peripherals. If you cannot find these exact models, please ensure that whatever device you do purchase matches the specifications.

Tablet, Keyboard Cover & Stylus

Samsung Galaxy Tab S6 Lite/S-Pen	Logitech Universal Folio for 9-10" Tablets
	
10.4-inch display 4GB of RAM 64GB of Storage S Pen Stylus	Integrated Bluetooth Keyboard Compatible with Android & iOS Stylus holder

Laptop



15.6 inches
10th Gen Intel® Core™ i5 processor,
8GB RAM
512 GB SSD
Windows 10
BAG

For help and advice regarding device choice, contact
Lee Wilson (Assistant Head) lee.w_wsf@gemsedu.com



Appendix 2: Required Apps List

App	Grade 1 & 2	Grade 3 - 5	Secondary
Office 365			
Microsoft Outlook			
Microsoft OneDrive			
Microsoft Word			
Microsoft PowerPoint			
Microsoft Excel			
Microsoft SharePoint			
Microsoft OneNote			
Microsoft Forms			
Microsoft Whiteboard			
GEMS Classroom (formerly Phoenix Classroom)			
Zoom			
Coaches Eye			
GCSEPod			
Google Chrome Browser			
Google Expeditions			
Google Maps			
HUDL			
Kahoot			
Khan Academy			
NearPod			
Padlet			
PicsArt			
Quizizz			
Quizlet			
Times Tables Rockstars			
Twinkl			
YouTube			
YouTube Kids			



Appendix 3: Responsible Use Policies (RUP) Links

[Primary School Responsible Use Policy](#)

The Primary School RUP is intended to be read and agreed to at home. We recommend parents read through the RUP with their child in order to explain the importance of the agreement.

[Secondary School Responsible Use Policy](#)

The Secondary School RUP is designed to be completed in class. Teachers will explore the agreement with their learners and explain its importance, thus allowing learners take responsibility for their own behaviors. We do recommend all parents read the agreement to familiarize themselves with it.