Bedales Senior Devices Policy

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BEDALES

Contents

BEDALES

Devices Policy

Background

Bedales School prides itself on its liberal ethos, and we are committed to cultivating a community of creative and inquisitive thinkers with a love of learning.

Technology plays an important role in all of our lives: as a community we want technology to enhance our understanding of the world and to provide creative and innovative approaches to learning.

We also recognise that over recent years technology and its use has developed so quickly that society has had insufficient time to reflect on the right balance of how much to use technology. We are mindful of the negative impact of excessive screen time and social media access on us all, but particularly on young people.

At Bedales we want to equip our students to use their devices in a positive way: to be in control of their technology, not to be controlled by it. We want to ensure that our young people leave Bedales equipped and ready to use technology with confidence, control and creativity.

This document outlines the way in which we will manage devices from September 2024 at the Senior School.

Aim

Our aim for this policy is in line with the Bedales main aims. Further to this, we want to encourage good habits around phones and devices and an ongoing education programme is a key part of this strategy. This will be taught through the wellbeing curriculum, digital learning lessons, craft of learning and the assembly programme.

In order to promote good habits, as a community we should be mindful of the number of emails, assignments and messages we send each day and be respectful of time frames for responses. We should aim to send communication between 08.00-20.00 on weekdays and 08.00-14.00 on Saturdays. As a boarding school those on duty will need to send communication to each other beyond these hours.

Our aim is to help the community to be less dependent on our devices, moving away from poor habits such as ''just checking'', in order to develop good habits such as making specific times to check emails/messages. As a community we will aim to be mindful of how much communication is done electronically while recognising it is a very practical and helpful tool.

In order to help students use their devices safely and more successfully students should:
- Switch off notifications, apart from emergency contacts
- Set up their phones in a way that auto-play is removed
- Only follow people online who will make a positive impact
- Be critical about news feeds and be aware of how algorithms can influence all aspects of what is presented to each individual online
- Check your mood before you go on to social media to prevent engagement in negative behaviours or being overtired and spending too much time scrolling
- Engage positively at school with the activities and the co-curricular programme
- Follow the school's policy around devices – the Acceptable Use Agreement September 2024
- In the evening have a digital sunset and a good bedtime routine
- Ask for help always and do not be embarrassed if you get in to trouble online
- As Natasha Devon advises:
  - find ways to create 'space' between the urge and action of scrolling/gaming

- decide in advance how much time you want to spend playing a game or browsing an app and stick to it
- Search each piece of content or question 'fresh'. Don't just watch the videos or click on the links the algorithm suggests
- Try giving your parent a virtual tour of an app or game if they don't understand it
- Keep safe online – never post anything which inadvertently reveals your address or exact date of birth

Procedures

At the Senior School, as a community, we will seek to use phones and laptops/ipads in the following way:

Year Group	Policy
Block 3	No phones in the day and use of a school managed laptop. Day students hand their phones in at the DCR by 08.45. Collect 18.00 (14.00 on Wednesdays and 13.00 on Saturdays). Boarders can collect their school managed laptop in the morning for the day ahead and then collect their other devices after supper at 18.15. Phones will be put in a phone box during evening activities. Boarders hand in their phones, along with all other devices, at 21.30 during the school week.
Block 4	No phones in the day and use of own laptop or option to buy a school managed laptop. From September 2025 all Block 4 students will have a school managed device. Day students hand their phones in at the DCR by 08.45. Collect 18.00 (14.00 on Wednesdays and 13.00 on Saturdays). Boarders can collect their laptop in the morning for the day ahead and then boarders can collect their other devices after supper at 18.15. Phones will be put in a phone box during evening activities. Boarders hand in their phones, along with other devices at 21.40 during the school week.
Block 5	For 2024/2025 Block 5 students are allowed to keep their phone during the day, but this is on a 'not seen, not heard' basis. This will be reviewed at the end of the year for the subsequent Block 5. Students will use their own laptops or have the option to buy a school managed laptop. During lessons and activities Block 5 students hand in their phones in to a phone box for the duration of the lesson. If a student is using their phone during the school day without permission then they will lose access to their phone for 1 day, 3 days, 5 days on a sliding scale in line with the gating format. Over the first term Block 5 boarders will hand in all devices at 21.50. In the second term Block 5 boarders will hand in their phones only at 21.50 and in the summer term they will keep all their devices overnight, putting them away themselves and on flight mode or equivalent. This is to help prepare them for 6th Form.
6.1	6.1 students are allowed to keep their phones with them on a 'not seen, not heard' basis. Students are responsible for their own devices at all times. In lessons and activities students may be asked to put their phones in to a phone box. 6.1 students must take a laptop to their lessons.

BEDALES

	6.1 students are allowed to use their phones in their studies, but this privilege may be withdrawn if a student is not up to date with their work or if other concerns arise around self-regulation of device use.
	If a student is using their phone during the school day without permission then they will lose access to their phone for 1 day, 3 days, 5 days on a sliding scale in line with the gating format.
	6.1 boarders are allowed to keep their devices with them overnight but they must be shut away and on flight mode or equivalent after 22.30. 6.1 boarders will have to hand their devices in overnight for 1,3,5 nights on a sliding scale or longer if they are not able to manage their devices at nighttime.
6.2	6.2 students are allowed to keep their phones with them on a 'not seen, not heard' basis.
	6.2 Students are responsible for their own devices at all times. In lessons and activities students may be asked to put their phones in to a phone box. 6.2 students must take a laptop to their lessons.
	If a student is using their phone during the school day without permission then they will lose access to their phone for 1 day, 3 days, 5 days on a sliding scale in line with the gating format.
	By 6.2 students should be able to use their devices in a positive, controlled and healthy way ready for when they leave Bedales. Having a digital sunset and a positive bedtime routine is always important.
Staff	Staff will also manage their phones on a 'not seen, not heard basis'. In classrooms staff phones should be out of sight with notifications switched off, except for emergency contacts or if on call.
	When using phones, staff should use offices or outdoor spaces beyond the Orchard. The aim is for staff to role model good habits around phone use to the rest of the community.

Additional points

- For clarity, a 'not seen, not heard basis' means that phones are not seen or heard around the campus before 18.00. This includes transition times between lessons, the dining hall and queue, and assemblies.
- In class, laptops should not be used until the teacher gives permission.
- If a student uses a VPN in school they should expect to lose their device for 1, 3, 5 days on a sliding scale. This could impact learning and so students must not put themselves in this position. Students should also reflect on the reason they feel the need for a VPN and to have raised that need to see if it can be met.
- If a student persistently uses their device poorly in lessons/activities then they can expect to lose their device for 1,3, 5 days on a sliding scale. This will likely impact their learning and so students need to use their devices in a responsible way.
- If a student uses their device in a way which goes against the school's values and ethos or rules, for example persistent unkind or bullying behaviour, then students can expect to lose access to their device for a period of time as part of the sanction.
- It is requested that parents do not contact students during the school day 09.00-18.00. If an urgent message needs to be conveyed parents should contact the student's Houseparent/House team or the senior school reception team.
- Overseas students, whose parents live in time zones with a significant time difference to the UK, are allowed access to a device on which they can contact family overseas at the appropriate time during the day. Overseas students will liaise with Houseparent on this.

BEDALES

- Students with a medical or pastoral need, which requires them to keep their phone during the day, will be allowed to do so once parents, the pastoral teams/health centre have agreed to this requirement.
- At the start of each year, in tutor time, students will work through and sign the Student Acceptable Use Agreement to ensure that they are mindful of their use of technology as the technology continues to evolve.
- As a community we will continue to educate students on how to keep safe online, how to use technology positively and to always seek help from a trusted adult if a student gets into difficulties online.

Once again, the aim of this policy is to help us as a community to develop good habits around device use and to ensure that we are as present as possible throughout the community and in all aspects of learning both in and out of the classroom.

Recommended Reading

- Clicks – how to be your best self online – Natasha Devon
- The Teenage Guide to Digital Wellbeing – Tanya Goodin

BEDALES