GEMS EDUCATION

GEMS Education Mobile Phone/Personal Device Policy

This policy has been approved for operation within:	ALL GEMS Schools		
Status	Required		
Related Policies:	Be a GEM Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Acceptable Use of Technology Policy		
Owner	GEMS Education		
Date effective from	September 1, 2026	Date of next review	September 31, 2027
Review period	Yearly	Version	1.0

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1. Introduction

GEMS Education is committed to creating safe, respectful, inclusive, and distraction-free learning environments where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We maintain an unremitting focus on doing the right things well to drive high-quality outcomes for all students.
This policy aligns with UAE educational regulations and guidance regarding the prohibition of mobile phones and other personal communication devices in schools and supports the expectations and guidelines in the Be A GEM Playbook, which promotes responsibility, respect, positive relationships, self-discipline, and engagement in learning. The policy also seeks to:

- Maximise student focus and engagement in learning.
- Protect students' wellbeing and mental health.
- Reduce distractions during the school day.
- Promote positive social interaction and relationships.
- Protect privacy and safeguard all members of the school community.
- Prevent misuse of technology, including cyberbullying, inappropriate recording, photography, and sharing of content.
- Support the development of responsible digital citizenship.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear expectations regarding the possession and use of mobile phones and personal digital devices by students in GEMS schools.
The policy aims to:

- Ensure compliance with UAE regulatory expectations.
- Establish consistent practices across GEMS schools.
- Support positive behaviour and productive learning environments.
- Outline consequences where expectations are not met.
- Clarify the roles of students, parents, and staff in supporting compliance.

Definition of Personal Digital Devices:
Personal digital devices include any privately owned electronic device capable of communication, internet access, recording, photography, videography, data storage, artificial intelligence functions or wireless connectivity. This includes, but is not limited to mobile phones, smart watches, smart glasses, tablets, earbuds and other wearable or portable electronic devices.

3. Policy Statement

GEMS schools operate a **mobile phone and personal digital device -free learning environment**.
Students are not permitted to use mobile phones, smart devices with communication capability, or similar personal digital communication devices such as Meta glasses, during the school day unless specifically authorised under an approved exemption in coordination with GEMS School Support Centre- Head of Inclusion.
Where students are permitted to bring a personal digital device to and from school for safety or transport reasons, the device must remain switched off and secured in accordance with school procedures throughout the school day.

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Any use, visible possession, or unauthorised access to a personal digital device during the school day will be considered a breach of this policy.
The school reserves the right to confiscate the mobile phone or digital device and apply sanctions in accordance with this policy, the Be A GEM Playbook, and applicable UAE regulations.

4. Expectations

Student Expectations
Students will:

- Leave mobile phones and other personal digital devices at home wherever possible.
- Ensure any personal digital device brought to school remains switched off and out of sight.
- Not use mobile phones or personal digital devices during lessons, transitions, breaktimes, lunchtimes, assemblies, trips, examinations, or extracurricular activities unless expressly authorised.
- Not use mobile phones or personal digital devices to record, photograph, livestream, or share images, audio, or video of any member of the school community.
- Follow any school procedures relating to mobile phones or personal digital devices storage.
- Demonstrate behaviours consistent with the Be A GEM Habits of the H.E.A.R.T- Habit of kindness, Empathy everyday, Awareness of others' needs, Respect in all and Trust built through care.

Staff Expectations
Staff will:

- Consistently implement this policy.
- Model appropriate technology use.
- Record breaches and communicate concerns to parents.
- Apply consequences fairly and proportionately through Be A GEM.
- Ensure any confiscated devices are securely stored.

School Expectations
Schools will:

- Communicate expectations clearly to students and parents.
- Provide clear procedures for confiscation, storage, and return of devices.
- Ensure implementation aligns with safeguarding and privacy requirements.
- Monitor compliance and address recurring concerns through the Be A GEM behaviour support processes.

5. Consequences for Breach of Policy

The school will use the graduated approach focused on education, restoration, and accountability as outlined in the Be A GEM SOP/Playbook.
First Breach

- Device confiscated and held securely with senior leadership or designee until collected by a parent or returned in line with school procedures.
- Behaviour incident recorded.
- Student engage in a restorative conversation with appropriate staff member regarding responsible behaviour.

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Second Breach

- Device confiscated and held securely with senior leadership designee until collected by a parent.
- Behaviour incident recorded
- Student to sit “reflection” session after school with staff.

Third Breach

- Device confiscated and must be collected by a parent
- Internal (1or 2 days) in school reflection (suspension).
- Senior leadership meeting with parents regarding conduct
- Behaviour contract implemented as appropriate.

Persistent or Serious Breaches

Examples include:

- Refusal to surrender a phone.
- Filming, photographing, or recording others without consent.
- Cyberbullying.
- Sharing inappropriate content.

Consequences may include:

- Internal or external suspension.
- Restricted privileges.
- Formal behaviour review.

Out of school suspension

Where a student repeatedly breaches the policy despite interventions, refuses to comply with school procedures, or engages in serious misuse of a device, suspension may be considered in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and regulatory requirements.

6. Parent Expectations

Parents play a critical role in supporting this policy and are expected to:

- Support a mobile phone/personal digital device -free learning environment.
- Avoid contacting students directly during the school day except through school communication channels.
- Reinforce the importance of responsible technology use.
- Ensure that students understand and follow school expectations.
- Attend meetings relating to repeated breaches.
- Respect school decisions regarding confiscation and management of devices.
- Model respectful and appropriate technology use within the school community.

7. Exemptions

Exemptions may be granted only in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the principal or designated member of the Senior Leadership Team. There may also be instances where mobile phones or personal digital devices may be needed to support a student of determination. In such cases it should be documented as part of the individualized education plan with clear guidelines as to how the device is to be used.

Examples may include:

- Verified medical requirements.

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- Documented special educational needs or disabilities where the device forms part of an agreed support plan.
- Individual safeguarding considerations.
- Other exceptional circumstances approved by the school.

Any approved exemption will be documented and reviewed regularly.

8. Communication

The school will communicate this policy through:

- Student induction programmes.
- Parent handbooks.
- School websites.
- Parent information sessions.
- Staff training.
- Student assemblies and behaviour education programmes.
- Be A GEM behaviour lessons and awareness campaigns.

All students and parents will be informed of the policy, expectations, and consequences at the start of each academic year and upon enrolment.

9. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier where required due to:

- Changes in regulations of the countries in which GEMS operates.
- Guidance from the school regulators where GEMS operates
- Emerging safeguarding concerns.
- Feedback from students, staff, and parents.
- Behaviour, attendance, and wellbeing data.

The review will ensure continued alignment with GEMS Education's values, Be A GEM framework, and regulatory expectations.

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