

**Policy on Electronic Addiction, Digital  
Wellbeing & Responsible Technology Use  
2025-26**

Owner: Principal / (Safeguarding Lead)

Approvers: SAB / Board of Governors Applies to: All students (FS–G8), staff, parents, visitors, contractor

Linked policies: Safeguarding & Child Protection, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying

(incl. Cyberbullying), Inclusion & SEND, ICT/Acceptable Use, Data Protection, PSHE/Wellbeing, Teaching & Learning

Review cycle: March (or earlier if guidance changes)

### **1) Purpose**

To prevent, identify, and address harmful or compulsive use of digital devices and content (“electronic addiction”) while promoting healthy, age-appropriate, and purposeful use of technology for learning and life.

### **2) Alignment & Principles**

- KHDA & UAE alignment: Supports KHDA’s emphasis on wellbeing, safeguarding, student protection, and safe digital behaviours; consistent with UAE child rights and cyber safety expectations.
- International best practice: Draws on WHO/AAP guidance on screen exposure, evidence-informed digital citizenship, and whole-school wellbeing frameworks.
- Core principles: Safeguarding first; education over punishment; age-appropriateness; inclusion; partnership with families; proportionality and due process; data privacy.

### **3) Definitions**

- Electronic addiction / problematic use: Persistent, compulsive device or platform use that interferes with sleep, learning, behaviour, mood, relationships, or health.
- Digital wellbeing: Balanced, safe, and purposeful engagement with technology that protects physical, mental, social, and cognitive health.
- Personal device: Any non-school-issued phone, tablet, laptop, smartwatch, gaming device, or e-reader.
- School device: Any device provisioned by the school (cart iPads, Chromebooks, PCs, interactive panels).

#### **4) Roles & Responsibilities (summary)**

##### Role Key Duties

Principal/DSL Policy owner; ensures safeguarding, escalation, and staff training.

SAB/Governors Oversight; receive termly wellbeing/safety reports and challenge leaders.

Digital Safety Lead (ICT Head) Filtering, monitoring, incident triage; staff/parent training resources.

Heads of Phase/Year Implementation; tutor time checks; targeted support.

Teachers/TAs Model balanced use; enforce classroom expectations; refer concerns.

Counsellor/Wellbeing Screen, advise, and run interventions; family support.

Parents/Carers Enforce home routines; co-sign agreements; attend workshops.

Students Follow AUP; balance time; report concerns; support peers.

#### **5) Device & Screen-Time Expectations**

##### 5.1 On-Campus Use

- FS–G2: No personal devices in school. If brought (e.g., travel), handed to Reception until dismissal.
- G3–G5: No phones visible during school day. Smartwatches in school mode (notifications off).
- G6–G8: Phones off and away from gate to gate (arrival to dismissal). Use only with explicit staff direction for learning.
- All phases:
  - Learning first: devices are tools, not entertainment.
  - No social media, gaming, or video streaming during the school day unless a teacher authorises it for learning.
  - Photos/recordings only with staff permission and never in toilets, changing areas, prayer rooms, or other sensitive locations.

##### 5.2 Age-Guidance for Daily Leisure Screen Time (home)

(Guidance for families; teachers reinforce in PSHE.)

Age Recommended daily leisure screen time (non-school) Notes

Under 2 Avoid, except video-calls with family Focus on caregiver interaction.

2–5 Up to ~1 hour, high-quality, co-view, when possible, prioritise sleep, outdoor play, talk.

6–10 ~1–2 hours max Establish device-free meals/evenings; no devices 60–90 mins before sleep.

11–13 ~2 hours max Strong parental controls; discuss online behaviour and risks.

14–18 2–3 hours max (context-dependent) Prioritise homework, sleep (8–10 hrs), real-life activities.

Device curfew (home): Recommend all devices out of bedrooms overnight; charging station in common area.

### 5.3 Platforms & Age Limits

- Students must follow platform age restrictions (e.g., most social media 13+).
- Parents are advised to supervise accounts, privacy settings, and friend lists.

## 6) Curriculum, Prevention & Education

- PSHE/Wellbeing & Computing: Explicit teaching on healthy habits, focus & attention, sleep, posture/vision care, cyberbullying, online reputation, misinformation, consent, digital footprints, persuasive design, and managing notifications.
- Classroom routines: “Tech on purpose” briefings, visible timers, brain breaks, posture checks, “eyes away 20–20–20” habit.
- Assemblies & Campaigns: Termly themes (e.g., “Balance Your Byte”), Digital Wellbeing Week, parent cafés.
- Staff modelling: Emails during working hours, no WhatsApp class groups with students, professional boundaries online.

## **7) Identification, Reporting & Support**

### 7.1 Early Warning Signs

Sleep problems, irritability on removal, declining grades/engagement, secrecy around devices, social withdrawal, headaches/eye strain, missed activities, repeated rule-breaking.

### 7.2 Reporting Pathways

- Students/Staff report concerns to Class Teacher/Head of Year → DSL if risk of harm.
- Parents contact Class Teacher/HoY or Counsellor.
- Immediate risk (self-harm, exploitation): DSL follows safeguarding procedures.

### 7.3 Screening & Triage

- Counsellor/DSL may use brief, age-appropriate checklists and parent interviews to assess functional impact.
- Record on student file; agree a Digital Support Plan with targets (e.g., sleep, study plan, reduced late-night use) and review schedule.

### 7.4 Tiered Interventions

- Universal: PSHE lessons, whole-class routines, parent guidance.
- Targeted (Tier 2): Small-group coaching on habits/time-management; app blocking/parental controls; homework scaffolds.
- Intensive (Tier 3): Individual counselling, multi-agency support where needed; medical referral if comorbidities suspected.

## **8) Behaviour, Confiscation & Restorative Measures**

- Confiscation: If a device is used against school rules, staff may confiscate it safely and log the incident.
- 1st instance: Return at end of day with reminder.
- 2nd: Parent collects; behaviour conversation.

- 3rd+: Meeting with HoY/SLT; Digital Support Plan; possible short loss of on-site device privilege.
- Serious breaches (e.g., bullying, sharing harmful content, recording others without consent): follow Behaviour and Safeguarding policies; sanctions may include internal isolation, suspension in line with KHDA expectations, plus restorative conference and re-education.
- Restorative approach: Reflection tasks (media diary, sleep log), peer education, community service (e.g., create a wellbeing poster campaign).

### **9) Safeguarding, Privacy & Data**

- All online harms (grooming, exploitation, self-harm forums, sexualised content) are treated as safeguarding risks and escalated to the DSL.
- The school's filtering and monitoring aim to block harmful categories while respecting privacy and proportionality.
- Searching a device: only if necessary and proportionate to prevent significant harm, by authorised staff, with a witness, and logged; parents informed unless doing so places the child at risk.

### **10) Inclusion & Reasonable Adjustments**

- For Students of Determination or EAL learners, assistive technology may be essential. Reasonable adjustments are documented in IEPs/ILPs, with boundaries to prevent over-reliance and to protect wellbeing.

### **11) Homework & Learning Design**

- Teachers design homework with offline balance in mind and give realistic time estimates.
- Long tasks should include offline options where possible.
- No requirement for late-night submission times.

### **12) Parent Partnership**

- Home–School Digital Wellbeing Agreement signed annually (expectations, curfews, supervision, reporting).
- Termly workshops: parental controls, age-limits, media balance, cyber-safety.

- Regular communication: how to spot overuse, how to talk to children about tech.

### **13) Staff Conduct & Professional Use**

- Staff use school systems for student communication; no personal social media contact.
- Classroom tech use must be purposeful, time-bound, and accessible to all learners.
- Staff minimise non-urgent out-of-hours communication and model balance.

### **14) Monitoring, Evaluation & KPIs**

- Data tracked termly: number/nature of incidents, confiscations, referrals, attendance/late patterns linked to late-night use, student/parent survey indices for sleep, stress, balance.
- Targets: e.g., 25% reduction in repeated device breaches; ≥85% of students report “good balance”; ≥90% of parents confident using controls.
- Annual report to SAB with actions for improvement.

### **15) Implementation Timeline (first year)**

1. Term 1: Launch policy; parent agreement; staff training; assemblies; baseline surveys; configure filters/MDM.
2. Term 2: Targeted interventions; parent cafés; mid-year review with KPIs.
3. Term 3: Student-led campaign; evaluation; revisions for next year.

#### Appendices (templates)

- A. Student Acceptable Use (FS–G2 / G3–G5 / G6–G8) – age-specific one-page agreements.
- B. Home–School Digital Wellbeing Agreement – device curfews, bedrooms-free, reporting steps.
- C. Digital Support Plan – goals, strategies (sleep schedule, timers, app limits), review dates.
- D. Incident & Confiscation Log – date, context, action, parent contact, follow-up.
- E. Parent Guide (1-pager) – quick tips on controls, conversations, and red flags.

Quick “At-a-Glance” Classroom Poster (for rooms & corridors)

- Tech on purpose
- 2 eyes, 2 feet (posture)
- 20-20-20 (every 20 mins, look 20 ft away for 20 sec)
- Timers on
- Talk first, tech next
- Phones off & away unless your teacher says otherwise

If you want, I’ll convert this into a branded Word/PDF pack with:

- a cover page,
- three age-specific AUPs,
- the parent agreement,
- a confiscation log sheet, and
- a one-page parent guide.