

HILLHEAD HIGH SCHOOL



DIGITAL DEVICES POLICY

**READY TO FOCUS:
NO MOBILE PHONES**



**READY TO LISTEN:
NO AIRPODS/HEADPHONES**



**READY TO LEARN:
IPADS CHARGED**



KINDNESS



AMBITION



INTEGRITY



RESILIENCE



RESPECT



KINDNESS



AMBITION



INTEGRITY



RESILIENCE



RESPECT

Policy Rationale: For Better Learning


When digital devices are used in a personal capacity in class this has a negative impact on learning and teaching. Using mobile phones for even brief periods in class takes young people's time and focus away from their learning.

Furthermore, research has shown that mobile phones specifically are a distraction even when not in hand and that learners become distracted as they await notifications and are expected to reply and react instantly to new notifications. Research has also shown how social media use can significantly lower young people's attention span and ability to focus on one task. This all has a negative effect on young people's ability to learn.

The brain rewires itself constantly based on how it functions. This idea is known as neuroplasticity. The more time young people spend in constant task switching and searching for novel information, the harder it becomes for them to develop or maintain the capacity for sustained periods of intense concentration (Lemov et al, 2023: 59)

Statistics from the recently published Glasgow City Council Health and Wellbeing Census highlight the scope of mobile phone use, with 32% of pupils in S1-S6 reporting that they spend more than six hours of their free time on electric devices on weekdays, and 54% of pupils spending more than six hours on devices at the weekends.

32%
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weekdays and **54%**
on weekends (S1 - S6)

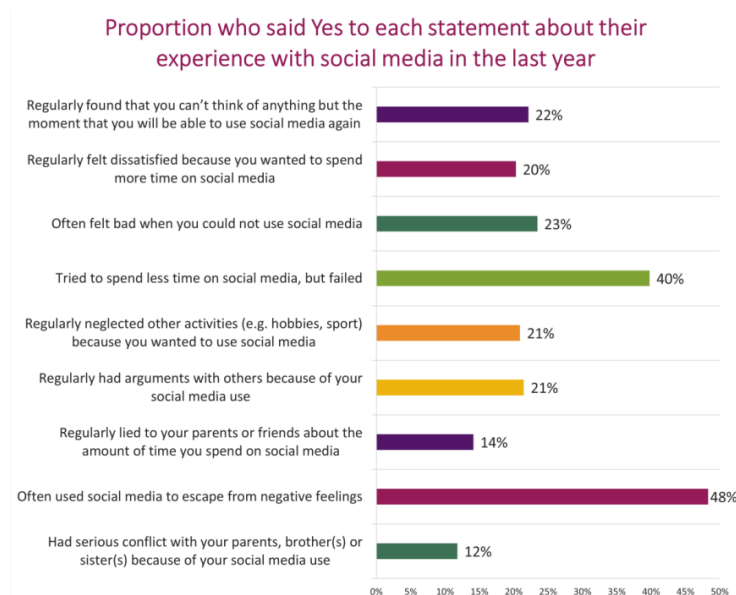


However, as a school we appreciate and value the role digital technology can play in improving learning and teaching experiences when integrated by teachers in a planned and managed way. Since 2020, every young person at Hillhead High School has been able to engage in high quality digital learning experiences using iPads provided free of charge thanks to significant investment from Glasgow City Council. As such, the focus of this policy is on promoting the positive use of iPads which will support pupils to build the skills required to thrive in an increasingly digital landscape.

Policy Rationale: For Better Mental Health

When a young person's mental health suffers, so does their learning. There is significant research which has proven the negative impact of social media use on the mental health of young people. Social media accessed via mobile phones increasingly contributes to mental health issues in young people including depression, low-self-esteem and loneliness.

Social media can become an unhealthy addiction which leaves young people caught in a cycle requiring instant gratification and the need for approval. Indeed, studies have shown that social media can have physical and chemical impact on the brain leading to young people becoming dependent on the 'rush' social media can bring. These statistics from the Glasgow City Council Health and Wellbeing Census indicate the scope of addictive behaviours:

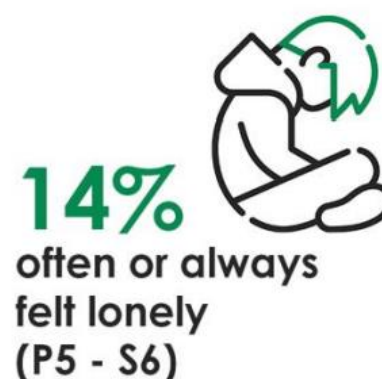


Our policy is focused on ensuring that classrooms are a safe haven from the negative impact of mobile phones and social media. In contrast to personal devices, Glasgow City Council School iPads are an example of digital devices which are carefully managed. They are designed to prevent user access to social media and block inappropriate websites, enabling pupils to use these devices and focus on their learning without the distractions and potential dangers of unmanaged and unsupervised internet and social media use.

Policy Rationale: For Better Connection

Removing mobile phones from classrooms allows young people to be more connected with their learning experiences. Additionally, evidence suggests that mobile phone-free classrooms help reduce the increasingly prevalent concern of teenage loneliness as, without their phones, learners engage in more meaningful face-to-face interactions and build social skills and friendships.

Concerns about social isolation are reported by pupils themselves. The results of the Glasgow City Council Health and Wellbeing Survey report that 43% of pupils in P5-S6 sometimes felt left out by friends and 10% always felt left out of things. 37% of pupils reported sometimes feeling lonely, and 14% of pupils said they always felt lonely.



Glasgow City Council iPads also play an important role in enabling young people to connect with their learning. iPads are used to connect learners digitally with their classmates and their learning. Using Microsoft Teams via iPads as a digital platform for learning supports learners to engage with their learning resources in a consistent and manageable way across the school. As well as the universal benefits iPads can bring, they are integral to our work to support pupils with Additional Support Needs to connect with their learning. iPads have a wide range of accessibility features which can be used to support pupils with visual, physical and motor, auditory and learning needs.

A Rationale Underpinned by the Principles of Nurture

Children's learning is understood developmentally.

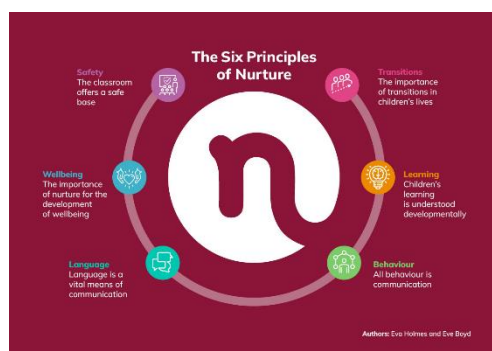
The adolescent brain is one which is still developing. Importantly, during the teenage years the part of the brain which is last to mature is the pre-frontal cortex. This part of the brain is responsible for attention, decision-making and impulse control. Teenagers are still at a stage in their biological development where they should be supported by adults to use digital devices responsibly.

The classroom offers a safe base.

A consistency of approach towards digital device use enables young people to understand what is expected of them so they feel clear and secure in their learning routines. The classroom becomes a safer space for young people when they are free from the demands of social media, including expectations of an instant response.

The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing.

Social media use is closely linked to poor mental health, including depression and poor self-esteem. Moreover, a reliance on social media can contribute to feelings of loneliness and isolation when this leads to decreased in-person social interaction. Removing mobile phones specifically from the learning environment removes the pressures of social media and encourages meaningful face-to-face interaction which allows young people to develop their social skills and build friendships.



A Rationale Underpinned by the Principles of Nurture

Language is a vital means of communication.

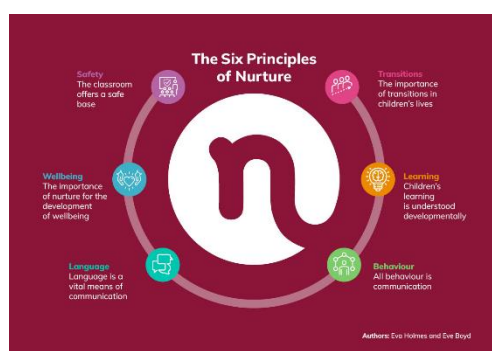
We recognise that all stakeholders – including learners, teachers and parents – will share many opinions on our digital devices policy. This will be the case ahead of and during implementation of this policy. We will listen to and value what our stakeholders communicate with us as a school.

All behaviour is communication.

Digital devices are part of our everyday lives. When young people use digital devices inappropriately in the classroom they may be communicating many different things, including their reliance on social media. Young people are also communicating to their teachers that they are not focused on their learning. We want to support young people to be fully immersed in their learning and to build their social skills and relationships as part of their school experience.

The importance of transition in children's lives.

Transitions can be a difficult part of life. People naturally worry about change, and might be asking: what will a digital devices policy look like when implemented in practice? We recognise there will be a wide range of feelings from different stakeholders, including apprehension. The way we implement our policy in practice will be mindful of the transitions involved during the school day, as young people learn to use their digital devices in line with our new policy. By following the six principles of nurture we aim to successfully manage feelings of anxiety around these transitions.



Our Policy in Practice: School Expectations

Ready to focus

Our expectation is that mobile phones are not seen or heard in class. We expect that pupils do not use their phone for any reason; that phones are turned off or on silent mode so that notifications do not interrupt learning and teaching; and that if a teacher requests that any pupil puts their phone away that this instruction is followed without issue.



Ready to listen

Our expectation is that pupils do not wear any earphones, headphones or Air Pods when in class. This is so that pupils are fully aware of their surroundings and able to listen fully when in class. We expect that if a teacher requests that any pupil removes their headphones or similar devices that this instruction is followed without issue.



Ready to learn

Glasgow City Council provides all pupils with iPads which are used to enhance pupil learning experiences. We expect that all pupils bring their iPad to school every day, charged ready for use. We expect that pupils take care of their iPads and always use them responsibly.



Our Policy in Practice: The role of pupils, teachers and parents

The role of pupils

Pupils are asked to keep their personal digital devices, including mobile phones/Air Pods/earphones, away and on silent in all classes. Pupils are expected to bring their iPads every day and use these devices responsibly. Pupils should be ready to focus, listen and learn.



The role of teachers

Teachers will regularly remind pupils of routines and expectations surrounding the use of digital devices in classrooms, during assemblies and via daily tannoy announcements. Should any concerns arise that any pupil is not following the digital devices policy, teachers will follow standard interventions within their departments.



The role of parents and families

We ask for the support of all parents/carers as we begin to implement this policy. Please discuss the use of digital devices regularly at home. If the school contacts you with any concerns, in the first instance we would ask for your support in addressing this situation at home.

If there are persistent concerns, parents will be invited to a meeting in the school so that these can be addressed, and we can discuss how the school can best support your child to follow the school digital devices policy.



Questions that Parents May Ask

Why are you implementing this policy?

There is a strong body of research which illustrates the negative impact mobile phones can have on the learning and wellbeing of young people. We are keen to remove these issues from the classroom environment and focus on promoting the positive use of digital devices, namely iPads.

How will I contact my child in an emergency?

During class time, please contact the school office on 0141 582 0100. Personal digital devices can be used freely at breaks and lunchtimes and you may contact your child directly or via the school office as appropriate.

What if I need to be in communication with my child throughout the day?

We request that you do not contact your child on their personal device during class time, as this interrupts the learning and teaching of the full class. Pupils can use their phones freely at breaks and lunchtimes. Break time is 11- 11.15am, and lunchtime is 1.15-1.55pm. Pupils will be able to check and respond to any messages during their free time.

How does this policy respect the human rights of students?

This policy is informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 3 (best interests of the child) and Article 28 (right to education).

What about the positive role that digital devices phones can play in learning?

All young people in Glasgow City Council are provided with an iPad which allows pupils to access learning technology in a fair and equitable manner. The technology the iPads provide is excellent and can enhance student learning experiences in a variety of ways. Furthermore, the protection provided by the iPads including firewalls and no access to social media means that young people are supported to use digital technology in a positive and safe manner.

What if my child does not have an iPad, or their iPad has a technical problem?

There will be some circumstances where young people may not have iPads for periods of time – for example if they are newly enrolled to the school or if an iPad requires repaired. In these cases the teacher will make a reasonable adaptation, which may include providing a non-digital learning experience. All classrooms have A3 posters with QR codes which enable them to receive targeted support if they are having an issue with their iPad. They can also speak with their class teacher or their Year Head for support.

What does this policy mean for me as a parent?

As a school, we hope to have the support of all parents in implementing this policy. Please discuss the policy with your child regarding school expectations. Year Group Heads may contact you if there are any concerns about a young person using digital devices inappropriately in class. We would ask that you have a supportive discussion about this

situation at home. Should there be any persistent concerns we will request that you attend school for a meeting.

What will happen if my child uses their phone in class?

Should any young person have their phone out in class for any reason, they will be asked to put it away so that they are ready to learn. This should be the end of the issue. However, if there are any further concerns the class teacher will follow the standard interventions within the department. If there are any persistent concerns we will request that you attend a school meeting.

Can pupils use their phones in the classroom before the lesson has started, or after the lesson has ended?

No. Our expectation is that phones are away and Air Pods/headphones are removed before or upon entering the classroom and remain kept away until pupils have left the classroom.

Is there any acceptable circumstance for pupils to use their phone in class?

Yes. In a very limited set of circumstances mobile phones may be used. This primarily involves instances where pupils and staff use their mobile phones as medical devices, or for the purposes of translating. If any pupil is allowed to use their phone for any reason this information will be shared with teachers.

What is the GroupCall app?

This is our main method of direct communication with parent and families. If you have not downloaded the app, you can find out how to do so on our school website.

Are pupils required to charge their iPads at home?

Yes. Each pupil should arrive at school with their iPad charged and ready to be used. There are iPad charging stations available in the school which can be used during the day.

What if I am concerned about the cost of charging devices at home?

As of January 2023, it was estimated that the annual price of charging an iPad ranged between 77p and £2.25. If any family is concerned about the cost of living the school is keen to provide support. We have a dedicated Financial Inclusion Support Officer, and you can find more details here about the work we do to reduce the cost of the school day and support families financially: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/gc/hillheadhigh/school-information/cost-ofthe-school-day/>

How can I learn more about how to keep my child safe when using online or social media?

For more information and advice you can visit our school webpage, which signpost parents and families to a range of links: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/gc/hillheadhigh/parent-zone/advice-and-support/internet-safety/>

Questions that Pupils May Ask

Why are you implementing this policy?

We are implementing this policy because we believe it is in the best interests of your learning. There is a significant body of research which illustrates the different ways in which mobile phones can negatively impact on your learning. Moreover, we are very concerned about how mobile phone use can lead to poor mental health and wellbeing in young people. However, we also recognise the positive impact digital technology can have on your learning. By consistently bringing your iPad and using this device in class in a safe and supported manner, you will be able to benefit from exciting learning opportunities and develop valuable digital skills.

How can I contact my friends and family during the school day?

Pupils can use their personal devices freely at break and lunchtimes. If there is an urgent need for your parent/family to contact you during the school day they will be able to do so via the school office. We are requesting that parents do not contact their children during class time, as this can disrupt learning.

How does this policy respect my human rights?

This policy is informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 3 (best interests of the child) and Article 28 (right to education).

What will happen if I use my phone in class?

Your teacher will ask you to put your phone away, ensuring it is on silent mode or off. If this happens repeatedly, we will request that your parents attend a school meeting.

Can I use my phone when I'm not in class?

Pupils can use their phones at break and lunchtimes. If you ask to leave a class for any reason, for example to go to the toilet, your teacher may ask you to leave your phone in the class along with the rest of your personal belongings.

Can I use my mobile phone in class as an alternative to using my iPad?

No. iPads should be the primary technology used in class to enhance the learning experience. If any pupil does not have an iPad for any reason, the teacher will make adjustment to enable the learner to participate in the learning experience.

Am I expected to charge my device at home?

Yes, although there are iPad charging stations available across the school which can be used during the day. However, it is vital that each pupil arrives in the morning with their iPad charged and ready to be used. The cost of charging an iPad is minimal and chargers and cables are widely available.

Do I need to buy my own charger?

This may be the case. In some circumstances, you may not be issued with a charger, or your charger may become damaged by accident or via general use over time. iPad chargers are widely available at a low cost, and many pupils and families own Apple Devices which may also be compatible with iPads. If any young person is worried about the cost of a charger they can speak with their Pastoral Care teacher or Year Head. We are keen to support all pupils and families financially and there are many supports available, including access to the school Financial Inclusion Support Officer:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/gc/hillheadhigh/school-information/cost-ofthe-school-day/>

What if I am having problems with my iPad?

If you have any issues with your iPad, you should scan the QR code on the iPad support posters which are present in every classroom. Alternatively, please speak to your class teacher or Year Head for further advice.

Am I allowed to listen to music in class?

Pupils are not allowed to wear Air Pods, earphones or similar in class. Your teacher may play music in the class, which creates a sense of community and a positive ethos. However, we require pupils to be ready and able to listen fully at all times and this is not possible when wearing earphones etc.

Is there any acceptable circumstance for pupils to use their phone in class?

Yes. In a very limited set of circumstances mobile phones may be used. This primarily involves instances where pupils and staff use their mobile phones as medical devices or translators. If any pupil is allowed to use their phone for any reason this information will be shared with teachers.

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