

STUDENT GADGET USE POLICY

COVER PAGE

Policy Title: Gadget Use Policy

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Revision Date: _____

Effective / Implementation Date: _____

Next Review Date: _____

Approved By: Board of Governors _____

BOARD APPROVAL

This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Pestalozzi Academy Board of Governors and shall take effect from the implementation date stated above.

Board Chairperson: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Head of School: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

1. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

The Educational Demand for ICT Integration

Integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the classroom is a fundamental requirement for preparing students for a digital global economy, shifting education from traditional lectures to dynamic, student-centred environments (Shah, 2024). Central to this transformation is the strategic use of mobile learning devices (specifically laptops, tablets, and smartphones) alongside a robust Learning Management System (LMS) like Toddle. Together, these technologies act as powerful catalysts for education, providing equitable access to digital resources, supporting personalised learning pathways, and enabling seamless content distribution and assessment both inside and outside the physical classroom (ClassVR, 2025; Prahani et al., 2022). Despite the profound pedagogical benefits of this digital infrastructure, the unmanaged presence of internet-enabled devices introduces significant challenges, such as cognitive distraction or "brain drain," which can reduce a student's focus and capacity to learn (Ward et al., 2017).

To successfully harness the educational power of these gadgets and the Toddle LMS while actively mitigating the risks of digital distraction and misuse, a structured and strictly monitored framework is required. Therefore, this policy establishes clear boundaries to ensure that digital tools function exclusively as instruments for educational enhancement rather than sources of disruption.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to regulate and guide the responsible use of digital devices to enhance learning while maintaining a disciplined, safe, ethical, and legally compliant school environment.

Technology at Pestalozzi Academy must:

- Strengthen academic excellence.
- Promote digital literacy.
- Uphold academic integrity.
- Protect privacy and safety.
- Support character formation.
- Reflect African values and global competence.

Technology is a privilege (not a right) and must always serve an educational purpose

1.2 Educational Philosophy

A. The Pestalozzi Triad: Head, Heart and Hands

This policy is grounded in the Pestalozzian educational philosophy of educating the whole child:

Head (Intellectual Development)

Technology supports critical thinking, research skills, inquiry, innovation, and analytical reasoning.

Heart (Moral and Emotional Development)

Digital engagement must reflect empathy, respect, integrity, and ethical responsibility. Students are expected to demonstrate kindness and dignity in all digital interactions.

Hands (Practical Application)

Students apply knowledge through project-based learning, digital production, coding, presentations, collaboration, and real-world problem solving.

Responsible gadget use must engage all three dimensions — intellectual rigour, ethical awareness, and practical competence.

B. Integration of SEE Learning

Pestalozzi Academy integrates Social, Emotional and Ethical Learning (SEE Learning) into all aspects of school life, including digital engagement.

SEE Learning ensures that students develop:

- Self-awareness in digital spaces.
- Emotional regulation when interacting online.
- Ethical discernment in sharing information.
- Compassion and empathy in communication.
- Responsible decision-making.

Digital literacy without ethical literacy is incomplete. This policy, therefore, promotes technological competence anchored in emotional intelligence and moral responsibility.

C. Alignment with Enko Pillars

Future-Oriented

Students must become digitally fluent, adaptable, and innovative leaders prepared for emerging technologies.

Global Wings

Technology connects learners to global knowledge networks, academic institutions, and collaborative platforms.

African Roots

All digital engagement must uphold respect, dignity, integrity, community values, and Ubuntu (“I am because we are”).

2. JUSTIFICATION FOR GADGET USE

2.1 Under the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC)

In alignment with the standards of the Examinations Council of Zambia, digital literacy is a core competency.

The CBC emphasises:

- Critical thinking (Head)
- Ethical and civic responsibility (Heart)
- Practical skill development (Hands)

Authorised devices support:

- Inquiry-based learning
- Project-based assessments
- Digital portfolios
- Collaborative research
- Data analysis and problem-solving

The integration of gadgets enables holistic competency development consistent with the Pestalozzi Triad.

2.2 Cambridge IGCSE

In accordance with Cambridge Assessment International Education standards:

- Independent research is required.
- ICT proficiency is assessed.
- Coursework often requires digital submission.
- Analytical and investigative learning is emphasised.

Technology enables structured intellectual engagement (Head), responsible collaboration (Heart), and practical output (Hands).

2.3 International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP)

Under the framework of the International Baccalaureate Organisation:

- Extended Essays require digital academic research.
- Internal Assessments require digital production.
- Academic honesty policies demand ethical digital conduct.

IB philosophy aligns strongly with:

- Intellectual inquiry (Head)
- Ethical responsibility (Heart)
- Applied research and presentation (Hands)

2.3.1. Environment Standard

Standard B2: The school provides and maintains resources to support the implementation of IB programmes.

Relevant Practice

B2.1: The school provides **physical and digital resources**, including information technologies, to support teaching and learning.

Implication for gadget use:

- Schools must provide or allow access to:
 - Computers, tablets, phones and laptops
 - Internet access
 - Subject-specific software and digital tools
 - Graphing calculators and scientific technology
- Devices are recognised as **essential learning tools**, not optional extras.

2.1.2. Learning Standard

Standard C1: Teaching and learning are aligned with IB philosophy and approaches.

Relevant Practices

C1.6: Teaching and learning use **a range of appropriate resources, including digital technologies.**

C1.7: Students develop **Approaches to Learning (ATL)** skills, including:

- Research skills using digital tools
- Media and information literacy
- Communication using technology
- Critical thinking using digital resources

Implication for gadget use:

- Devices must support:
 - Inquiry-based learning
 - Research and investigation
 - Collaboration
 - Data analysis
 - Creation of academic work

Technology must enhance—not replace—learning.

2.3.3. Culture Standard

Standard A4: The school develops, implements, and communicates policies that support IB programmes.

Relevant Practices

A4.2: The school has an **academic integrity policy** addressing ethical use of technology.

A4.3: The school guides **responsible use of digital technology**.

Implication for gadget use:

Schools must have:

- ICT / digital technology policy
- Acceptable use policy
- Academic integrity policy covering technology

These policies must regulate:

Allowed use:

- Research
- Coursework and assignments
- Collaboration
- Educational applications

Restricted use:

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Unauthorised communication during assessments

2.3.4. Leadership and Infrastructure Standard

Standard B1: Leadership ensures systems and resources support programme implementation.

Relevant Practice

B1.5: The school develops and maintains **technological infrastructure** to support learning.

Implication:

Schools must ensure:

- Reliable internet

- Classroom technology (projectors, smartboards)
- Student access to digital tools
- Secure and monitored digital environment

2.3.5. Student Learning and Agency

Standard C3: Students actively engage in their learning.

Technology must support:

- Student inquiry
- Independent research
- Creation of knowledge
- Collaboration

Devices help students:

- Conduct fieldwork research
- Complete Internal Assessments
- Write Extended Essays
- Analyse real-world data

2.3.6. IB Key Principle on Gadget Use

IB expects technology to be:

- ✓ Purposeful
- ✓ Educational
- ✓ Ethically used
- ✓ Accessible
- ✓ Supporting inquiry and ATL skills

Technology must **enhance learning, not distract from it.**

3. TYPES OF AUTHORIZED GADGETS

The following devices are permitted strictly for academic use:

- Laptops (strongly recommended for structured academic tasks)
- Tablets / iPads
- Smartphones (restricted to educational applications only)

All devices must:

- Be password-protected.
- Remain in silent mode during school hours.
- Be used only with teacher authorisation.
- Be used in ways consistent with the Pestalozzi Triad and SEE Learning principles.

4. GUIDELINES ON RESPONSIBILITY AND LIABILITY

4.1 Ownership and Risk

- Devices are brought to school at the owner's risk.
- The school bears no liability for loss, theft, or damage.
- Devices left unattended will not be investigated by the school

4.2 Responsible Digital Conduct

Students must demonstrate:

Head

- Academic integrity.
- Critical evaluation of online information.
- Lawful and ethical research practices.

Heart

- Respectful communication.
- Empathy in digital interactions.
- No cyberbullying or harassment.
- Protection of others' privacy.

Hands

- Proper use of digital tools.
- Secure handling of personal data.
- Productive and educational application of devices.

Possession of a gadget during examinations constitutes examination malpractice.

5. PARENTAL AND SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Parental Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians shall:

- Reinforce ethical digital behaviour at home.
- Monitor online activity.
- Encourage SEE Learning values in digital interactions.
- Support the enforcement of school policy.
- Provide Internet resources such as bundles for the smartphone/tablet or a MIFI for a laptop (The school may provide regulated WIFI in some circumstances.)
- Understand legal implications of cyber misconduct.

5.2 School Responsibilities

Pestalozzi Academy:

- Shall provide structured digital literacy education.
- Shall integrate SEE Learning into digital citizenship lessons.
- Shall supervise technology use.
- Shall promote cybersecurity awareness.
- Shall apply discipline fairly and consistently.
- May provide regulated WIFI in some circumstances.

6. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy aligns with the laws of the Republic of Zambia:

6.1 Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act of 2025

Criminalises cyberbullying, identity theft, hacking, online harassment, and unlawful distribution of digital content.

6.2 Data Protection Act 2021

Protects personal data and privacy rights.

Students must not share personal information or images (whether their own or those of others) without explicit consent.

6.3 Electronic Communications and Transactions Act 2021

Recognises legal validity of digital communication and establishes accountability for electronic misconduct.

Online actions carry legal consequences.

7. DISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORK

Definition of an Offense

Under this policy, an "offence" or "violation" is defined as any action where a student uses an Authorised Device (Smartphone, Tablet, or Laptop) in a manner that contradicts the educational purpose of the school, disrupts the learning environment, or breaches safety and privacy protocols.

Specifically, an offence includes, but is not limited to, the following actions:

- **Unauthorised Use:** Using, or visibly displaying, a gadget during class time or school hours without explicit instruction and permission from the teacher.

- **Entertainment and Distraction:** Accessing non-educational platforms such as social media, video games, or streaming services for music and movies while on school premises.
- **Academic Dishonesty:** The mere possession (switched on or off) or active use of a gadget during a test, quiz, or examination.
- **Privacy Violations:** Recording audio/video, taking photographs, or sharing personal information or images (whether their own or those of others) without explicit consent from the individuals involved.
- **Cyberbullying and Harassment:** Using the device to threaten, mock, or spread malicious content about peers or school staff, in violation of the school's Code of Conduct and the Zambian Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act No. 2 of 2021.
- **Network Misuse:** Attempting to bypass the school's internet filters or the Toddle Learning Management System (LMS) controls using VPNs, personal hotspots, or other unapproved methods.

Disciplinary Measures and Consequences

Failure to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this policy will result in the following tiered disciplinary actions. The severity of the sanction depends on the magnitude of the offence and the frequency of violations.

Tier 1 – Minor Offences

Applicable Misconducts: First-time unauthorised use or visible display of a gadget during class time; device ringing or causing an auditory distraction; accessing non-educational platforms (social media, games, streaming) during school hours.

Consequences:

- Immediate confiscation of the gadget.
- Two-week gadget ban from the school premises.

Tier 2 – Repeat / Moderate Offences

Applicable Misconducts: A repeat of any Tier 1 offense; refusal to surrender a device to a staff member when requested; attempting to bypass school internet filters or Toddle LMS controls using VPNs or personal hotspots; taking unauthorised photographs or audio/video recordings of peers or staff.

- **Consequences:**

- o Immediate confiscation of the gadget.
- o A formal warning letter was placed in the student's file.
- o One-month gadget ban from the school premises.

Tier 3 – Gross Misconduct

Applicable Misconducts: Examination malpractice (possession or active use of a gadget during any test or exam); cyberbullying, harassment, or online threats; sharing personal information or images of oneself or others without explicit consent; accessing or distributing illegal, malicious, or highly inappropriate content.

- **Consequences:**

- o Indefinite confiscation of the gadget.
- o One academic year gadget ban from the school premises.
- o Referral to the Disciplinary Committee under the school's Student Code of Conduct.
- o Possible police involvement and prosecution under the Zambian Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act No. 2 of 2021.

Discipline aims not only to punish but to restore ethical awareness consistent with Head, Heart, and Hands development.

8. POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed annually or upon changes in:

- National legislation
- Examination body standards
- Enko Education and Pestalozzi academy strategic direction
- Technological developments

9. CONCLUSION

Pestalozzi Academy believes technology must:

- Develop the Head through intellectual rigour.
- Shape the Heart through ethical and emotional awareness.
- Strengthen the Hands through practical competence.

When guided by SEE Learning principles and grounded in African values, technology becomes a transformative instrument for learning, leadership, and community upliftment.