



The Apple International School



POLICY ON ELECTRONIC ADDICTION ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-26

Disconnect to Reconnect with Life.

In alignment with the UAE Ministry of Education's ban on mobile phones and unauthorised electronic devices in schools (Ministerial Resolution No. 851 of 2018 – Student Behaviour Management Regulations), Apple International School is committed to creating a safe, distraction-free, and supportive learning environment. This policy addresses both enforcement of the ban and support for students' digital wellbeing to reduce electronic addiction.

Purpose

This policy aims to safeguard the wellbeing, learning, and social development of students by addressing the growing concern of electronic addiction, including excessive use of smartphones, tablets, computers, gaming devices, and social media.

Scope

This policy applies to all students from FS to Year 13 during school hours, activities, and on school premises.

Objectives

- Ensure full compliance with UAE MoE directives on device use.
- Minimize distractions and protect academic focus in classrooms.
- Safeguard students against cyber risks and misuse of technology.
- Support students in developing healthy, balanced digital habits.
- Strengthen partnerships with parents and the wider school community.

Cyber Addiction

What is internet addiction?

Internet addiction, which is also called problematic internet use or internet dependency, is a behavioural condition marked by excessive, compulsive, or out-of-control use of the internet that causes problems in many areas of a person's life.

Internet addiction is characterized by an uncontrollable desire to be online, to the point where internet activities dominate and undermine daily routines, social connections, professional or academic performance, and even physical health. While time spent online can be immensely productive, when it becomes a compulsion it can damage grades, a scholastic career, work, and relationships.

When a student feels more comfortable with online pals than off-line friends or can't stop playing games, gambling, or compulsively checking smart devices, that student may have a cyber addiction.

Problematic smartphone or internet use has been linked to lower life satisfaction and mental health symptoms such as depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, lack of sleep and obsessive-compulsive behaviour, with children and young people the most vulnerable.

Signs and symptoms of cyber addiction vary from person to person. Here are some general warning signs:

- Losing track of time online. Frequently the student loses track of time and stays online longer than intended. Do a few minutes turn into a few hours? Does the student get annoyed if his or her time online is interrupted?
- Having trouble completing tasks at work or home. Is the student falling behind on homework and studying? Perhaps the student often studies late because he or she cannot complete work on time due to unhealthy online habits.
- Isolation from family and friends. Is the student's social life suffering because of excessive time spent online? Is the student neglecting family and/or friends? Does the student feel like no one in "real life"— understands him/her like his/her online friends? Feeling guilty or defensive about Internet use. Is the student sick of friends and/or family nagging him/her to get off the computer or put away the smartphone? Does the student hide Internet use or lie about the amount of time he/she spends on the computer or a smart device?
- Feeling a sense of euphoria while involved in Internet activities. Does the student use the Internet as an outlet when stressed or sad, or for gratification or excitement?

Internet or computer addiction can also cause physical discomfort, such as the following:

- carpal tunnel syndrome (pain and numbness in hands and wrists).
- dry eyes or strained vision.
- backaches, neck aches, or severe headaches.

Cyber bullying/Social Media

Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. Harassing, dissing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding, and cyber stalking are all examples of cyber bullying. Students should not send emails or post comments with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else. Engaging in these behaviours, or any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges. In some cases, cyber bullying can be a crime. Remember that your activities are monitored and retained.

Students will be held accountable for Cyber-Bullying, even if it occurs off-campus during the school year and negatively impacts the academic environment at Apple International School . Students are reminded that in the UAE there are extreme consequences for online defamation of character of person or organisation.

The UAE Student Conduct Disciplinary Bylaw and the Federal Decree-Law no. (5) outlines that deliberately creating, transferring and publishing photos and comments on Social Media (Instagram, WhatsApp, Snap Chat, TikTok, Discord, etc) that undoubtedly shows defamation of individuals or staff members or School Leadership of character, dignity and integrity are breaking the law.

Key provisions relevant to schools' excerpts of Federal Decree-Law no. (5) state:

21	Invasion of privacy, including photographing others, or creating, transferring, disclosing, copying or saving electronic photos (just taking a photo or video of someone without their permission, or saving a photo they have posted, is enough). Defamation. Publishing news, photos, scenes, comments, statements or information, even if true and correct. Amending or processing a record, photo or scene for the purpose of defamation of or offending another person or for attacking or invading his privacy.	Up to 6 months' imprisonment +/- fine of AED 150k – 500k
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Students need to be fully aware of their responsibilities that is reinforced at school via the curriculum. This provides the students with a clear understanding of the above conditions within the UAE and includes comprehensive coverage of issues relating to students' own 'digital footprints' and creating a positive online presence, as well as interaction with others.

Role as Parents

Social media is one of the main channels via which internet addiction may spread. Users can publish updates, photographs, and videos, as well as like, comment, and direct message others on social media networks. Parents should also lead by example, modelling healthy internet behaviours themselves. Parents can help manage internet addiction in teens by initiating honest conversations about internet use, establishing reasonable and clear boundaries, encouraging alternative activities, monitoring online activities, and leading by example. Parents should talk to their teens about how they use the internet in an open and nonjudgmental way.

- Begin the dialogue by expressing your love and care for the well-being of your teen.
- Instead of using accusing language, focus on your observations and concerns about their internet use. You should also encourage your teens to share their opinions and experiences with the internet.
- Setting reasonable and clear boundaries on screen time is also essential in avoiding excessive internet use.
- Establishing precise daily or weekly limitations on gadget usage, for example, especially during study or family time, might help achieve a healthy balance.

Rules and Regulations

Prohibited Devices

- Mobile phones, smartwatches with communication functions, gaming devices, and any unauthorised electronic devices.
- Exceptions may be granted for educational purposes only, with prior written approval by school leadership.

Permitted Devices

- Devices under BYOD policy (e.g., tablets, laptops) which has to be used strictly for academic purposes, under teacher supervision.

Inspection and Confiscation

- Devices found in violation will be confiscated immediately.
- **First offence** → Confiscated for **1 month**.
- **Repeated offences** → Confiscated until the **end of the academic year**.
- Parents will be notified and required to sign:
 - *Form 24* (Device Confiscation Notice).

- *Form 25* (Device Return Receipt).
- Inspections are limited to bags and personal belongings. Staff will not touch students or their personal items. Students must present the item themselves.

Misuse Cases

- Any device found containing inappropriate, harmful, or privacy-violating content (e.g., images of staff or students) will be referred to the Child Rights Unit and MoE as per regulations.

Violations

will result in a denial of access and possible further disciplinary action. Notification to parents, Suspension of network, technology, or computer privileges, Detention or suspension from school and school-related activities, Legal action and/or prosecution

- Not respecting the values and ethics of the local host culture.
- Giving access of your password to any other user.
- Any attempts to transmit software designed to compromise the operation or security of the school network in any manner
- Install and use of virtual Private networks within the school network and outside.
- Use school technologies to pursue information on illegal activities.
- Any attempts to circumvent the licensing control or the copying of software from the network.
- Students should not download or attempt to download any software on to school equipment
- Use or attempt to use another student's assigned hardware, subscriptions, files, or personal information
- Tampering or experimenting with the school network or equipment, including efforts to bypass the school's Internet filters or proxies
- Use school technologies in a way that could be personally or physically harmful
- Attempt to hack or access sites, servers, or content that isn't intended for my use
- Use school technologies to send spam or chain mail
- Plagiarise content I find online and attempt to find inappropriate images/content
- Post personally identifying information, about myself or others
- Use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom and/or at home

Awareness and Support Measures

Digital Wellbeing Education

- Curriculum-embedded lessons on screen time management, cyber safety, and healthy technology use.
- Workshops for parents on setting boundaries and modelling responsible digital habits.

Alternatives to Device Use

- Encouragement of face-to-face interaction, sports, arts, and reading during free time.
- Mindfulness and wellbeing sessions to help students manage stress without relying on devices.

Counselling and Support

- Students showing signs of electronic addiction will be referred to school counsellors.
- Individual plans may be designed to support students in building healthier routines.

Monitoring and Intervention:

- Staff are trained to identify signs of electronic addiction (e.g., withdrawal, declining performance, lack of sleep).
- Counsellors provide early intervention, guidance, and referrals where necessary.
- Parents are informed if a child's usage becomes concerning.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **School Leadership:** Ensure implementation of this policy and monitor its effectiveness.
- **Teachers:** Enforce device rules, promote healthy use, and model balanced behaviour.
- **Counsellors:** Provide support to students showing signs of addiction.
- **Parents:** Monitor children's device use at home and cooperate with the school in enforcing guidelines.
- **Students:** Follow school rules, practice digital discipline, and report concerns.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing alignment with UAE MoE directives and evolving digital trends.

Dr Jinto Sebastain

Executive Principal

The Apple International School, Dubai

Reviewed Annually

Last date of Review: August 2025

Form 24 – Device Confiscation Notice

School Name: _____

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Grade/Class: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Reason for Confiscation

- ☐ Mobile phone brought to school in violation of MoE regulations.
- ☐ Smartwatch / gaming device / unauthorised electronic device.
- ☐ Device misuse (e.g., use during class, inappropriate use, other).
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Confiscation Details

- **Date of Confiscation:** _____
- **Confiscated by (Staff Name & Position):** _____
- **Location (e.g., classroom, corridor, playground):** _____

Confiscation Period

- ☐ First offence – Device to be held for **1 month**.
- ☐ Repeated offence – Device to be held until **end of academic year**.

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that my child's device has been confiscated in accordance with **UAE MoE Resolution No. 851 (2018)** and the school's Electronic Device Policy.

I understand the device will only be returned after the completion of the confiscation period.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

School Acknowledgement

Received by (Staff Signature): _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Form 25 – Device Return Receipt

School Name: _____

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Grade/Class: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Device Details

- Type of Device Returned: _____
- Date of Confiscation: _____
- Date of Return: _____
- Confiscation Period Completed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Acknowledgement of Return

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that the device confiscated from my child has been returned to me by the school. I understand that any further violations of the **UAE Ministry of Education regulations (Ministerial Resolution No. 851, 2018)** and the school's **Electronic Device Policy** may result in stricter disciplinary measures, including confiscation until the end of the academic year.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

School Confirmation

Returned by (Staff Name & Position): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____