OurICT

ICT SOLUTIONS FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR.

The essential guide to creating a School
Bring Your Own Device Policy. (BYOD)

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Introduction.

As mobile technology becomes a dominant force in the UK education sector, most schools have established a bring your own device (BYOD) scheme that encourages students to bring their own laptop or tablet device to school to be used as a digital learning device.

There are many logistical, financial and educational advantages to implementing a BYOD scheme at your school. However, there are many pitfalls to consider therefore, it is critical to ensure your school introduces an effective BYOD policy that represents the best interests of both the school and the students.

A quick Google search is a great starting point for finding several BYOD policies that created by other schools and articles that are relevant to the subject (hopefully that is how you ended up here!). As you research the topic, keep in mind that one BYOD school policy may not be suitable for another policy. In other words, don't copy and paste someone else's BYOD policy because some of the rules may not apply to your individual situation!

Considerations when creating a BYOD policy.

Of course, the content of your school BYOD policy is up to you. However, this article presents several examples taken from different Bring Your Own Device policies that should be considered when introducing a new policy to your school.

General Guidelines for use (Acceptable Use Policy).

All BYOD policies should include basic guidelines for the use of personal devices on school grounds that all students must agree to and comply with. Some schools call these General Guidelines, while others refer to this as an Acceptable Use Policy.

The following bullet points are examples of policies you could consider adding to your general guidelines:

- Updates to BYOD can occur at any time. The newest version of the BYOD policy always prevails and cancels older versions of the policy.
- Use of personal devices on school grounds is at the discretion of teachers and staff. All students MUST use their devices as directed by their teacher and staff.
- The school does not provide secure facilities for students to store their personal devices. Students should keep their devices with them at all times.
- The use of personal devices is not to be a distraction in the classroom or private study areas used by teachers or pupils.
- The purpose of the use of personal devices at school is strictly educational. Mobile devices can only be used for personal reasons if the student has been given permission by a teacher or another member of staff.
- All users agree not to exploit technology resources, interfere with another student's use of the resources, or use technology resources with the intent of causing harm to others.
- All students are required to check their personal devices daily to make certain the device is fully charged, free from unsuitable material and any malicious content such as viruses and malware that may compromise the security of the school's network. These checks must be completed before bringing the device to school.
- To conform to Health and Safety compliance, any defective or damaged devices should not be brought into the school.
- Any attempt to circumvent the schools network security and/or filtering policies is forbidden. This includes downloading programs to bypass security or accessing and setting up proxies.
- Students are not allowed to use personal devices outside of the classroom, unless they are being used during school visits, field trips, or outside activities.
- Any form of distribution of videos or pictures of other students and staff is strictly forbidden.
- Playing games on devices is NOT permitted unless the game is used for educational purposes.

You should also consider implementing a separate Acceptable Use Policy that can be referred to throughout your BYOD policy.

Consequences for disruption and misuse.

Any breach of the rules that are outlined in your BYOD policy should be treated as a serious offense and should be met with one or more consequences that are clearly defined in your BYOD policy. The following bullet-points contain examples of consequences you could consider applying in the event of disruption and misuse:

- Access to the school network and any accompanying privileges will be revoked (wireless and wired).
- Breach of any rules will result in the personal device being confiscated. The student's parent(s) will be contacted and then required to collect the personal device from the front desk at the end of the school day.
- The student will be banned from using personal devices at school indefinitely, or for a period of time that is at the discretion of the teacher or staff member.

You could also consider a similar '3 strikes policy' procedure like the example below:

- If a student's personal device is confiscated once, it will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. The student will be warned that disruption/misuse will not be tolerated and it must not happen again.
- If a student's personal device is confiscated twice, then it will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. The student's parents will be notified of the incident
- If a student's personal device is confiscated for a third time, the parents will be asked to collect the device from the front desk at a time that is mutually convenient.
- If a personal ICT device is repeatedly confiscated, the pupil will lose all BYOD privileges and will no longer be allowed to use their own device for digital learning.

Obviously, the level of consequence is at your discretion, but is typically dependent on the severity of the offense. Also, if your school has a Behavioural Management policy (which I'm sure it does), be sure to refer to this and state that misuse of personal devices will be dealt with in accordance with this policy.

Device requirements.

Your BYOD policy should also include a 'Device Requirements' section that clearly states the minimum hardware and software specifications required for the student to use their device for digital learning.

Because most schools use cloud-based apps in the classroom, it is no longer essential to have a high specification device to run the latest applications. However, to guarantee the best digital learning experience, you may wish to provide minimum specification guidelines such as the examples provided below:

- **Wi-Fi connectivity** – The student's personal device should be capable of 5 GHz dual-band Wi-Fi connectivity. This means that the device should have 802.11 a/b/g/n or ac as the Wi-Fi standard. Also, be aware that if your student's device is equipped with wireless standard 802.11 b/g/n, then it's unlikely to be 5 GHz compatible.
- **Screen size** – Take into consideration what the minimum screen size requirement should be for your school's BYOD policy. Consider the purpose for which your students will be using their personal devices before providing a minimal screen size requirement.
- **Antivirus** – As per the school liability statement below, emphasize that the student's personal device should be kept secure and that an up to date antivirus application is recommended for all devices. *
- **Operating system** – Depending on what education apps your students will be using, you may wish to provide details on operating system requirements, such as Android 7 Nougat or iOS 10 for example.

> *With regards to the third statement above, many schools provide their students with a network security application that can be installed on their personal device. This ensures that all devices used on the network conform to network security compliance. You may wish to discuss this with your internal ICT function, or your outsourced services provider.*

Are there any other device considerations? You may wish to offer advice regarding best practices on how students can keep their device safe, such as keeping it in a suitable bag or sleeve that will provide extra cushioning in the event of an accident.

School Liability statement.

It's essential for your BYOD policy to include a liability statement, which clearly states the purchase, maintenance, insurance and safety of personal devices is the responsibility of the parents and/or student. Students are fully responsible for their own devices including remembering to bring their device to school and when taking part in school activities. All devices brought to school by students is done so at their own risk. The liability statement can include bullet points such as:

- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their personal device is kept up to date with the latest operating system updates and upgrades.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their device is kept secure. Every student personal device must be password protected. Additionally, the appropriate security software must be installed to protect personal devices against the latest malicious threats such as viruses, malware, etc.
- Parents are required to have adequate insurance coverage in place to cover the cost of replacement or repair of the student's personal device in the event of loss or damage that occurs on school premises, or during school visits and activities.

In addition, you may also wish to state that the school is <u>not responsible</u> for the following:

- Any personal mobile devices that are broken on school premises or during school visits and outside activities.
- Any personal devices that are stolen or lost on school premises or during school visits and outside activities.
- Any personal data that is lost on personal devices while they are being used on school premises.

You may also wish to state that BYOD is not mandatory (if it isn't) and the decision to bring a personal device into school rests with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s), as does the liability of loss/damage of the personal device.

User agreement (or terms and conditions)

Finally, you may wish to end the BYOD documentation with a User Agreement or Terms and Conditions of Use. This can be signed/countersigned by the parent(s) to ensure they fully understand the BYOD policy, the School Liability Statement, and the General Guidelines that the students must conform to when using personal devices in school including the consequences of misuse and disruption.

Here's an example of some statements you could use in your user agreement:

For the student.

"Current device types that are approved for use at the school include laptops, notebooks and tablet devices that use either Windows, iOS or Android operating systems.

You agree not to connect to any other wireless or network service that is outside of the school network when using your personal device on school premises, or when taking part in school events and school activities.

By using your own personal device in the school or during school visits and school activities, you agree that you understand the school's Bring Your Own Device policy (BYOD) and that you agree to be bound to the rules, regulations and statements contained in this BYOD policy. This includes the Acceptable Use Policy, Consequences for Disruption and Misuse, Device Requirements and the School Liability Statement.

You also understand that the use of a personal device in school or for school activities is for learning purposes only and that it is a privilege, not a right to use your own personal device at school.

You understand that you are fully responsible for the safety, security and care of your personal device when using it in school, during school visits and participation in outside activities."

For the parent or guardian.

"You understand that [school name] accepts no responsibility for any loss and/or damage to your children's personal devices that are used in school, during school visits and activities, or when in transit to and from the school.

You understand that the decision to bring a personal device into the school rests with the parent/guardian, as does the liability for any loss and/or damage that may occur as a result of using the personal device in school, during school visits and other outside activities.

You understand that by allowing the student to bring their personal device into school, both you and the student agree to these terms and conditions and agree to be bound to the rules, regulations and statements contained in this BYOD policy, including the Acceptable Use Policy, Consequences for Disruption and Misuse, Device Requirements and the School Liability Statement."

Final thoughts.

It is important to remember that this article is a general guide that provides a basic overview of the policies, procedures and liabilities that should be considered when creating a BYOD policy for your school. You should not use this as a framework for creating a Bring Your Own Device policy.

As stated earlier, no two school BYOD policies are the same. Therefore, it is very important for you to invest the time to discuss the BYOD policy requirements for your school with your internal ICT function. This includes any staff members that are involved with the implementation of school policies and those that have knowledge of the school's compliance requirements.

In addition, remember to get feedback on the BYOD policy from teachers and other staff members that are involved with the day-to-day use of mobile devices for learning purposes.

There are other considerations that we have not discussed in this article such as network permissions, training, technical support considerations and the advantages of implementing BYOD at your school. These topics will be discussed in future articles on Our ICT website.

About Our ICT.

Established for over two decades, Our ICT provides a comprehensive range of ICT support services and technology solutions to the UK education sector. We work closely with teachers, Business Managers and internal ICT departments, providing day-to-day technician support, strategic guidance and expert advice.

We've helped many schools implement a BYOD policy, including the introduction of Mobile Device Management solutions and the latest wireless networking solutions.

If you require help with implementing BYOD at your school, please don't hesitate to contact our experts today by calling 020 8501 7670.