

# DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP AT BRIDGEPORT INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

## POLICY FOR THE APPROPRIATE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES BY STUDENTS

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## PHILOSOPHY

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Electronic devices and emerging technologies, when properly utilized, offer the potential for positive educational benefits and enhanced learning experiences for students. Use of such portable electronic devices as laptops, tablet computers, smartphones, eReaders, calculators, and portable media players can help prepare students for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and classroom instruction can benefit from student online access to books, educational websites, advanced mathematical calculations, and guides to word definitions, translations, and pronunciations. Electronic devices can aid interactive learning and recording of important information.

For such reasons, students are encouraged to Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) to the Academy, for education application and collaboration.

However, improperly used, electronic devices can be a detriment to the learning process. For example, texting and listening to music can be a distraction to teacher presentations, and such technology has been used for bullying, cheating, and recording video and audio without consent. The quality of instruction in the classroom can deteriorate if electronic devices are indiscriminately used by students.

It is the objective of Bridgeport International Academy (BIA) that electronic devices be used to support rather than interfere with the learning process and environment. This *Policy for the Appropriate Use of Electronic Devices by Students* has been designed to support this objective. A main guiding principle is that of “individual teacher discretion,” within the confines of this policy and administrative oversight. In other words, each teacher has broad discretion to determine what devices can and cannot be used within his or her own classroom.

While students are encouraged to use the productivity tools available to them and bring their own portable personal devices to school, each student must adhere to the BIA policy. The use of these devices is strictly up to the discretion of the school faculty and administration and adherence to policy. Violations of this policy can result in a variety of disciplinary actions, ranging from reduction in the student’s grade to confiscation of the devices to expulsion for more serious violations.

The use of the term “electronic devices” by BIA is meant to include portable, privately owned electronic technology that can send, receive, process, or store information, such as laptops (eg. Chromebooks), tablet computers (eg., iPad, Kindle Fire), smartphones (eg. iPhone, Blackberry, Windows Phone), e-book readers (eg., Amazon Kindle, Nook), calculators (eg. graphing calculators), and portable media players (eg. iPod, MP3 players). Such technology may provide wireless internet access, word processing capability, capturing of images and sound recordings, and transmitting information to other users. It does not include laser pointers (which students are not permitted to use during school or school-related activities) nor BIA desktop computers, whose usage is covered in the *Student/Parent Handbook*.

## DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP CORE VALUES

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The BIA policy is organized around the core values of “digital citizenship.” The term digital citizenship, or digital ethics, refers to the norms of appropriate, responsible, safe, and critical use of technology. It is a way for teachers, administrators, and parents to guide students to use the productivity tools available to them to

prepare them for a 21<sup>st</sup> century digital learning environment, and to do so in a manner that is productive to the learning process.

There are various core values that can be recognized with respect to digital citizenship. Eight of these core values form the framework of the BIA policy. These are:

- **Digital Access**
- **Digital security**
- **Digital law**
- **Digital communication and communication ethics**
- **Digital etiquette**
- **Digital health and wellness**
- **Digital rights and responsibilities**
- **Digital literacy**

These core values essentially address the issues of respect for oneself and others, education of oneself and others, and protection of oneself and others.

## **DIGITAL ACCESS**

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Given the importance of electronic devices and emerging technologies in today's academic, governmental, non-governmental, media, medical, and business realms, BIA supports making access to electronic devices a main concern, as long as those devices support the learning process. For example, access to educational videos and websites can be of benefit to learning objectives, as students supplement their classroom instruction, look up word definitions, access books online, and so forth. Graphing calculators can be a great aid to classes in mathematics.

At the same time, BIA recognizes that not all students have equal access, and thus BIA seeks to provide an environment that is fair to all students. Access to digital devices is restricted when such use is viewed to be inappropriate or counterproductive to the learning process.

1. Personal electronic devices, as defined in the first section of this policy, may be brought by the student to the Academy.
2. The use of electronic devices in the classroom is up to the discretion of the particular teacher. No electronic device may be used unless the teacher explicitly has given permission for such use for educational purposes.
3. Students have the right to use their personal devices during the lunch period (11:50am – 12:40pm) and during the time between classes.
4. Students may not text or make phone calls during class or study halls. This policy overrides point 2 above. Student texting and phone calls, including with parents/guardians, is restricted to the lunch

period, the time between classes, and after the student has completed all classes for the day, as well as when the student is off-campus, such as walking to a class on the University of Bridgeport. Students may use the office phone should there be a need to make an emergency phone call, and parents/guardians should be instructed to call the student only during lunch period or when the student has concluded class for the day.

5. Students may or may not be restricted from bringing their personal devices to the classroom or PE activity, at the discretion of the teacher. In such cases, students need to secure their devices either in their locker or in the BIA office, prior to entering the classroom or proceeding to the PE activity.
6. Electronic devices cannot be used during assessments, unless otherwise permitted by the teacher.
7. Students must comply immediately with any requests by the teachers or administrators to shut down devices, close the screen, or store the devices.
8. Printing from a personal device is not permitted unless approved by a teacher or administrator.
9. Teachers may restrict use of electronic devices in their classroom should it create an unfair advantage to those without such access, or may loan devices for such purposes, or may request students share use during the time of classroom instruction.
10. The use of student personal devices, as with any personally owned devices, is strictly up to school teachers and administrators.

## **DIGITAL SECURITY**

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As responsible citizens, students need to protect their devices and digital information and from those who cause harm or disruption. Such responsibility includes the need to secure devices against theft and damage, to backup data, and to protect against viruses and other destructive actions.

1. Students bring devices to school at their own risk, just like with any other personal item.
2. Keeping the device secure is solely the responsibility of the individual owner. BIA is not liable for devices stolen, damaged, or misplaced/lost on Academy grounds or district transportation to and from school. The theft, damage, or loss/misplacing of a device will be handled through the BIA administrative office in the same manner as other personal items that are stolen, damaged, or lost. BIA likewise is not held responsible for devices that have been confiscated.
3. It is recommended that students who bring electronic devices to the Academy use some means to personally identify and distinguish their electronic devices so that devices similar to others are not accidentally picked up and in order that lost/stolen items can be identified and returned to their owners.
4. Students are responsible for keeping their digital accounts secure and to be aware of the importance of keeping usernames, passwords, and online accounts private. It is highly recommended that security passwords be used on electronic devices.

## DIGITAL LAW

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Beyond school rules and regulations, there are greater issues of what actions and deeds are transgressions in terms of the society. Unethical use in terms of theft of identify or property, copyright infringement, plagiarizing, hacking into other's information, sending viruses or destructive worms, downloading illegal music, spamming, and other such actions that cause damage to others or otherwise violate local, state, or national laws are aspects that students need to be aware of in an ethical society..

1. It is against BIA policy to use a personal device to infect the BIA network with, or knowingly spread to others, a virus, Trojan horse, destructive worm, other malicious software, spam, or any program that will damage, alter, or destroy data or information, otherwise hinder use of another's digital property, or provide unauthorized access to data or information. Such actions will result in administrative disciplinary actions.
2. BIA has the right to collect and examine any device that is suspected of being used to cause problems or be the source of an attack or virus infection.
3. Possessing or accessing information on BIA property related to "hacking," altering, or bypassing network security policies is strictly proscribed and is subject to administrative disciplinary action.
4. Students are to adhere to all laws and statutes and BIA policies related to issues of copyright and plagiarism. Using electronic devices to plagiarize or commit copyright infringement will be handled according to the general policy for such transgressions outlined in the *Student/Parent Handbook*.
5. Theft or damage of electronic devices will be handled according to the general BIA policy for such transgressions relative to personal property, as outlined in the *Student/Parent Handbook*.
6. Use of an electronic device to download music illegally, or creating/publishing/submitting/ or displaying materials/media that are obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, damaging to another's reputation, harassing, abusive, or illegal is strictly forbidden and such actions will result in administrative disciplinary actions and carry the possibility of additional legal/law enforcement actions. Students should report any such instances encountered.

## DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNICATION ETHICS

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The digital revolution has aided the ability of students to collaborate with other students, communicate with teachers, and interact with other authorities in particular subjects. In so much as the communication advances educational objectives, such communication is encouraged. However, communications that distract from the learning process, such as irresponsible texting to peers, phones ringing in class, sending of inappropriate messages, and other disruptive communication decisions on the part of students violate communication ethics.

1. Teachers have discretion to allow students to collaboratively work on projects and communicate with other students during classroom times using their electronic devices, if such use fits with the educational objectives of the class.
2. As a rule, communication devices that ring, ding, or otherwise make audible sounds, including

audible vibrations, are to have the sounds turned off in the classroom. Individual teachers may make an exception to this policy as it benefits particular classroom exercises.

3. Students may not text, read texts, or otherwise communicate via electronic devices with other individuals, whether students, family or acquaintances, except during the lunch period (11:50am – 12:40pm) or after all their classes are done for the day, or when the student is off-campus, unless explicit exception is made to this policy by a teacher for educational purposes.
4. Students may not send inappropriate content to other students even if they are outside of the classroom.

## **DIGITAL ETIQUETTE**

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There are certain standards of conduct that students need to engage in when using electronic devices. Inappropriate use of technology has often led to the technology being banned in school environments. However, BIA recognizes that students need to understand proper etiquette and that the Academy has role in guiding them to use technology responsibly.

1. Students are not permitted to record the voice or image of another student in any way that invades the privacy of others, disrupts the educational environment, or is made without the prior consent of the individuals being recorded.
2. Students are not permitted to record, transmit, or post images/videos/audiorecordings of any person in school to public and/or social networking sites except as part of a specific class project, with the submission reviewed and approved by the instructor.
3. Students collaborating with others online or on networks for an assignment have a responsibility to make the student's submission reflects their own thinking and effort and that contributions from others are credited and acknowledged.
4. Personal devices may not be used to record tests and quizzes, or to cheat on assignments and assessments.
5. Teachers will closely supervise students to ensure appropriate use of technology in the classrooms.

## **DIGITAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

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The use of electronic devices can impact physical and emotional well-being of the student, such as internet addiction, repetitive stress syndrome, and adverse impacts from viewing of inappropriate content. Students need to be aware of such inherent dangers, and citizenship includes a culture of technology users being taught to protect themselves from such dangers through education and training. It is important that student's actions do not hurt others or cause the student himself or herself to be put in harm's way.

1. Students are encouraged to become aware of possible adverse impacts of excessive use of electronic devices, such as internet addiction and repetitive stress syndrome.

2. Students are not permitted to access or view any pornographic or sexually suggestive content while on school property.
3. Students using any device that permits visual recordings are not permitted to take, disseminate, share, or transfer images, video, or photographs that reveal private parts of the body that are ordinarily covered with clothing.
4. Cyber bullying and hazing are prohibited both during and outside of the official school day and both on the BIA campus and UB campus. Students who engage in such actions will be subject to administrative disciplinary action. Cyber bullying is defined as any act of bullying achieved through, but not limited to, the internet, any interactive digital communication device, or other mobile communication device. Hazing is defined here as any form of verbal, physical, or emotionally mistreatment, harassment, or abuse of a student in connection with his/her membership in any school-sponsored club or activity.

## **DIGITAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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For the academic environment to function properly there must be a balance of student rights and responsibilities with respect to the use of digital devices. In the United States, individuals are protected by a basic set of rights. Students also should have a right to certain protections. However, the use of digital devices in the school itself is considered a privilege and not a right and the use of the student of these devices includes an understanding of various responsibilities on the part of the student. Irresponsible and inappropriate use of the devices, for example, can lead to restrictions on the student's use, confiscation of the devices, and other disciplinary actions.

1. Students have the choice and opportunity to bring their electronic devices to Bridgeport International Academy if their parents and guardians permit it.
2. Students have the choice and opportunity to use their electronic devices at school at any time and any place when it is appropriate according to this policy.
3. Students have the right to access the BIA wireless network with their personal devices during the school day for educational purposes, including collaboration.
4. While access to electronic devices is available for each classroom, it is not guaranteed for each classroom situation; the teacher has the final say on procedures in the classroom.
5. Students have a responsibility for what they do when using electronic devices at school.
6. Students are to behave ethically and responsibly at all times with respect to their use of their electronic devices in the school, and are expected to make good choices.
7. Students have a responsibility to not impact negatively the ability of others to learn, including not disputing others in the classroom.
8. Students are responsible for what they say and do online and should recognize that what they place in the public sphere, such as words on a blog or posting of videos, may remain indefinitely and may cause hurt to others and themselves.



9. Students have the right to expect information on their personal devices will be kept private from other students, teachers, and administrators. However, use of personal devices in the school is considered a privilege and if a violation of this policy is suspected, administrators have the right to review information on the personal device, in the presence of the student, to determine if a policy has been violated. Students who do not turn in their device for such inspection waive their right to bring devices to school, and allegations of serious offenses by such students may be reported to local authorities.
10. Students who use personal devices at the school should not expect that files stored on BIA servers would always be private.
11. Students must not access, modify, download, or install computer programs, files, or information belonging to others.
12. Students must not alter computers, networks, printers or other equipment except as directed by a staff member.
13. Students must not waste or abuse school resources through unauthorized system use, such as playing online games, downloading music, watching video broadcasts, participating in chat rooms, and so forth. Printers are not to be used for personal use.
14. Technology, including electronic communications, should be used for appropriate educational purposes only and should be consistent with the educational objectives of Bridgeport International Academy.

## **DIGITAL LITERACY**

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In order to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century academic, workforce, and living environments, students need to understand how to use technology. One of the missions of BIA is advancing such understanding and information literacy, helping students understand existing technology, and providing skills to use emerging technologies.

1. Teachers may provide students instruction on how to use various personal devices as it pertains to learning objectives. However, this is not the mission of each teacher and students should make effort to become familiar with their electronic devices or seek teachers with expertise in the area.
2. Teachers may communicate information to the student regarding educational applications and suggest appropriate tools for use with the personal devices.
3. As facilitators of instruction in their classrooms, teachers are not expected to spend time fixing technical difficulties with students' personal devices in the classrooms. They may provide guidance on how to use a device and troubleshoot simple issues, but they will not provide technical support; this responsibility lies outside the classroom.

## DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

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There are two levels of disciplinary action, that of the teachers in their classrooms and administrative discipline. The students also should be aware that in the case of violations of local, state, or federal law, such as the illegal downloading of music or other criminal actions, the student may also be subject to legal action

1. **Classroom disciplinary actions.** Students who do not follow a teacher's classroom policy, in other words who use their electronic devices without teacher permission, are subject first of all to demerits and academic consequences: a reduction in grade for the class. Violations of classroom policy, including not immediately complying with any requests by the teacher relative to the electronic devices, may be subject to additional consequences at the discretion of the teacher: confiscation, parental notification, and detention. Repeat and serious offenses are subject to administrative disciplinary actions.
2. **Administrative disciplinary actions.** Students who violate BIA policy or have repeated violations in certain classrooms or multiple classrooms are subject to administrative disciplinary actions up to and including suspension or expulsion. The following administrative disciplines may be implemented, depending on the severity of the offense: confiscation of the electronic devices, suspension of bringing electronic devices to school, suspension of internet privileges, detention, disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion.

Any use of an electronic communication device that creates a disturbance or violates school policy may result in the device being confiscated by the teacher or staff member for the duration of the classroom period, or day, or for longer periods for repeated violations. Further disciplinary action may be taken against the students in possession of the device. Parental involvement may be sought, including the parent coming to the Academy to obtain the device.