

Personal Device Policy and Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the policy changing?

The Personal Device Policy supports the Bishop Chatard Mission of cultivating lifelong commitments to faith, learning, leadership and service by:

- Promoting focus, engagement, and critical thinking in class through clear and consistent technology expectations and enforcement
 - Supporting more meaningful in-person interaction with peers and faculty before class, between classes, at lunch, and in the classroom
 - Prioritizing the well-being and mental health of students, faculty, and staff
 - Reinforcing responsible and balanced use of technology
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What is the specific policy language?

The Bishop Chatard Student Handbook will read:

Personal Device School Day Policy

Student phones, smartwatches, and smartglasses must be powered off, stored away, and inaccessible for the entire school day, from before the morning bell at 8:35 a.m. until the conclusion of the school day.

For this policy, a **smartwatch** is any wearable device capable of sending or receiving messages, accessing the internet, making calls, recording audio or video, or otherwise functioning as an extension of a smartphone.

Headphones, earbuds, AirPods, or other listening devices may be used with school issued Ipads (not phones) only when explicitly permitted by a teacher for instructional purposes during class. At all other times, listening devices must be stored away for the duration of the school day.

iPads will continue to be used as instructional tools in the classroom under teacher supervision, consistent with current practice.

Failure to follow this policy will result in progressive consequences. If a faculty or staff member observes a student using or accessing a phone, smartwatch, or other unauthorized listening or communication device during the school day, the device will be collected and brought to the Main Office, where it will remain for the rest of the school day.

1. **First violation:** Device is collected and held in the Main Office for the remainder of the school day; two detentions issued.
2. **Second violation:** A parent or guardian must pick up the device, and a Friday school is issued.
3. **Third violation:** Device is confiscated and held in the Main Office; a parent or guardian must pick up the device, a Friday school is issued, and the student will be required to turn personal devices into the main office on a daily basis.
4. **Subsequent violations:** Any subsequent violation will result in additional Friday schools, in-school suspension, with possible exclusion from Bishop Chatard High School.

Students who need to use a school phone for urgent or emergency reasons may do so in the Main Office or School Counseling Office with permission from a school administrator or counselor.

What should students do with their phones and smartwatches during the day?

Students should turn off their phones, smartwatches, and smartglasses before the first class of the day. The healthiest option is for students to leave their personal devices in their backpacks locked in their lockers, or leave them in their cars, before the first class of the day and retrieve them after the final class, as research shows that physical distance from devices improves focus.

What if a student needs to make an emergency call or arrange transportation?

Students may request permission from a school administrator or counselor to use a school phone in designated areas, including the Main Office and School Counseling Office. This should be done during class time only in the event of an emergency.

How should parents contact students during the school day?

Students will continue to have access to personal email on their iPads throughout the school day, and email is the preferred method for non-urgent communication.

For urgent matters, parents should contact the Main Office. Staff will locate the student as needed.

Are exceptions available for medical needs?

Yes. Requests for phone or smartwatch use related to medical needs will be coordinated through our school nurses, Vice Principal of Academics, and Director of Academic Support. Each situation will be reviewed individually, and a plan will be created with the student and family to ensure that medical needs are met. Students seeking to use a device for health-related reasons must provide a doctor's note indicating the necessity.

How will communication work during emergencies such as a lockdown?

School safety experts agree that communication during emergencies is most effective when it comes directly from the school to families. Student phone or smartwatch use during these situations can interfere with safety procedures,

create confusion, and spread misinformation. Bishop Chatard will use its emergency communication system to keep families informed. These expectations will be reinforced and practiced during emergency drills to ensure students understand when and how device use is permitted, helping maintain safety, calm, and clear communication throughout the school community.

Will faculty and staff follow the same rules?

Faculty and staff are committed to modeling responsible technology use for students. While adults may need to use phones or smartwatches for professional responsibilities, such as communicating with colleagues, accessing instructional resources, or managing school operations, they are expected to demonstrate limited and intentional device use during the school day.

What about classes or activities that have used phones for learning in the past?

Teachers will adapt lessons to work without smartphones or smartwatches. While phones have sometimes been used for convenience, they are not essential for learning, and alternative tools like Ipads and classroom resources will be provided to ensure lessons remain engaging and interactive.

What about school-sponsored field trips and retreats that happen during the school day?

Personal device expectations remain the same during school-sponsored field trips and retreats that take place during the school day. Students should plan to follow the same guidelines they follow on campus, with devices kept away unless explicitly permitted by a supervising adult for a specific purpose (such as travel logistics, safety, or an instructional activity). Faculty and staff will communicate in advance if a device is needed or allowed for a particular trip or retreat.