



Bement Boarding Technology Use Policy 2019-2020

As a guiding principle of a Bement education, we seek to prepare students with the skills and mindset to thrive today and tomorrow and to root our students' growth and development in established, foundational norms, some of which may run counter to what is becoming widely acceptable today. Technology continues to evolve and when used properly enables incredible advancement in professional fields and personal lives. Inappropriate use of technology, however, can have detrimental effects to the growth and development of young people. While we cannot expect our rules and approach to address every situation, we believe these guidelines form the basis of a healthy approach for our boarding students.

Our *Family Handbook* outlines policies about technology at school. Boarding students, like day students, are not permitted to carry or use devices in school. They may only use school-owned devices to connect to the internet during school hours, and they may only do so under the direct supervision of a teacher. Phones and devices are not permitted at meals, sporting events, field trips as they interfere with the natural connections, growth and learning. Permissions may be granted for special circumstances. Boarding students may bring personal computers for use in study hall after dinner for academic purposes though these computers must remain in their backpacks until that time.

In the dorms, student use of personal devices is limited to specific time periods on both weekdays and weekends. Seventh through ninth grade may use personal devices from 7:45 to 9:00 p.m. from Monday through Thursday. Permission for additional time may be granted if a student has pressing school work to complete. This time is 7:45 to 8:45 p.m. for sixth graders and 7:15 to 8:15 p.m. for lower schoolers. Since screen use negatively impacts sleep and sleep cycles, we end technology use well before bedtime for students of all ages, allowing them time to wind down and prepare for lights out. Times will vary on weekends depending on our weekend schedule though generally students have 1-2 hours of access to personal devices per day for personal use. Seventh through ninth grade students may be granted additional time for homework assignments, secondary school applications, and other academic needs such as SSAT or TOEFL prep. Each dormitory also has a computer that is connected to the internet. The landline phone and computer are communal, so individual use is limited to no more than fifteen minutes at a time if someone is waiting.

Outside of these specific time periods, personal devices are locked in a technology cabinet. Boarding students who use devices during the specifically allowed time periods do so in the common room where they are supervised by a dorm parent, with only very rare exceptions. Nothing with a screen or access to internet will be allowed in the room after lights out including Apple Watches. If a student enjoys listening to music at bedtime, he or she may use a simple music player such as an iPod Shuffle or MP3 player or other basic music device. The music player may not be used while walking from the dorms to campus unless special permission is granted.

When our boarding students participate in excursions or activities away from school, we emphasize participation in that shared experience. Therefore, students are not permitted to bring devices along, unless they have permission from a dorm parent if they need a phone to remain in contact with a dorm

parent or for a particular purpose. Web-enabled devices and/or devices that can play videos are not allowed in rooms. Cell phone calls may be made in the common room, kitchen, hallways, or other locations depending on the dormitory.

Social media use (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) is not allowed for students under 13 years old (per the companies' own policies) and is only allowed for those 13 or older if they are able to use it responsibly.

The use of video and computer games is allowed, however, the rating on the game must be E for Everyone and boarding students are not able to play any single- or multiple-shooter games on any device or computer while in the dorms.

Boarding students who violate our rules on technology use policy including use of personal devices in restricted spaces, use of personal devices outside of acceptable hours, possession of additional personal devices, and use of social media, video games, or electronic communication of any kind in an unkind or irresponsible manner including prohibited content are subject to restrictions or further disciplinary action. A violation will result in the loss of technology privileges for non-academic purposes for six weeks, except to remain in contact with family. Continued violation will result in the loss of technology privileges for the remainder of the year.

At Bement, we value time spent together and the relationships built in our boarding community. In an effort to protect and promote face-to-face interactions and the life-long connections that these interactions help forge, there are set guidelines and boundaries around technology use. We are also trying to promote independence and responsibility. Therefore, we strive to maintain reasonable limits regarding the use of technology for communication and entertainment purposes. For this reason, access to devices such as cell phones or any device that allows access to the internet is restricted to specific times and public spaces. This is an intentional decision on the part of the adults in the community to help students manage the technology in all of our lives and give them the tools necessary to moderate their own technology use in the future. Bement prides itself on judicious use of technology and providing a space for students to develop in-person relationships. Technology use is consciously minimized, and we appreciate your understanding and support as we try to help our students learn to responsibly use technology.