

MHMS Technology Vision and Device Guidelines

As part of our Paideia philosophy of teaching the whole child in mind, body, and spirit, Merrol Hyde Magnet School is committed to the overall health and well-being of our students and faculty. This includes providing guidelines and reasons for some of our practices and policies, including technology such as cell phones, tablets, and personal computers.

Technology definitely has its place in the educational process. However, a device by itself, or infinite access to the internet, does not necessarily enhance or enrich student learning. With vast amounts of research emerging on the short-term learning effects and long-term health and psychological effects on children and teenagers, MHMS is taking a proactive approach to limit or restrict device usage on campus.

The guidelines below are designed to help students engage with authentic learning and content that match our vision of a well-rounded student. MHMS acknowledges the importance of technology in our world, and our goal is to foster creative and critical thinking for college-bound students using traditional teaching methods that are supplemented—not replaced—by technology and devices.

MHMS will continue to consult research, vet recommendations, and adapt these guidelines accordingly with input from all stakeholders—students, families, and educational professionals.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

At the elementary level, technology will not be used as a primary means of delivering instruction. Elementary students are NOT allowed to possess a cell phone or other similar device on campus. Smart watches that have communication abilities are also not allowed.

Kindergarten students will not use devices except for periodically in technology related arts (described below).

First grade students may occasionally use a device (with teacher supervision or direction) in a center for tasks such as fluency in color, shape, number, letter, money, or sight word recognition, or to play an instructional game. Center activities are typically less than 15 minutes, and devices are used sparingly.

In grades 2-3, classes have access to technology for directed teacher and student use. Learning objectives that begin at this level include keyboarding basics, internet safety, familiarity with Google tools, and how to navigate an iPad/Chromebook. Students may encounter a device a couple of times a week in this context.

In grades 4-5, each classroom will have a full class set of iPads. These devices will stay at school. They will be used intentionally and always with clear teacher supervision and instruction. Most instructional activities should be completed without students on a device; within a specific lesson plan, any work done by students using iPads will amount to no more than around 10-15% of the time allotted for that lesson. At this level, teachers may also set aside designated periods for students to do extended research for a project on the computers; teachers monitor and assist in this process.

All elementary students receive instruction in “technology” twice per month for 40 minutes. This related art class focuses on digital citizenship using a MHMS “protopage” with approved sites housed in students’ Clever accounts.

NOTE: Required state benchmark testing is done on Chromebooks or iPads up to 5 times during the year.

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

The Sumner County school district has issued every middle and high school student an iPad. Middle school students will be allowed to take their iPads home; *they are expected to bring it to school each day, fully charged.* At parents' request, MHMS also has the capacity to store and charge some student devices at school.

While students may occasionally use iPads in middle school classes as directed by a teacher, devices are not used as the primary means for delivering content. In addition to the iPad use agreement, MHMS has put the following guidelines in place for student health, safety, and wellbeing.

Mosyle@Home is a web-based tool that allows you to manage your child's device outside of school and at home. We STRONGLY encourage you to use this resource to help your student maintain healthy boundaries.

In grades 6-8, students may use iPads in class to access online textbooks or foreign language videos, for example. They may be asked to complete assignments in Google Classroom or Apple Schoolwork. Some of their tests will be on the iPad, and they may receive notifications through the Sumner County Schools App on their iPads regarding upcoming calendar events, assignment deadlines, relevant information for their clubs/sports, etc. Most instructional activities at this level should be completed without students on a device; within a specific lesson plan, any work done by students using an iPads will amount to no more than around 20% of the time allotted for that lesson (not per day).

MHMS has set an overnight lockdown period from 10:00pm-6:00am when the school device will be inaccessible for middle school students. A student can still access Google Classroom or their Clever account from any other connected device between 10:00pm and 6:00am.

At MHMS, middle school students do NOT need a cell phone to complete any work for school. A full copy of the cell phone policy and consequences is available on the school website.

HIGH SCHOOL:

In compliance with the state law effective July 1, 2025, high school students may no longer use their cell phones at school. This means that phones must be turned off and stored in lockers 7:45-3:00, including during class changes and lunch. A full copy of the cell phone policy and consequences is available on the school website.

The Sumner County school district has issued every middle and high school student an iPad. High school students will be allowed to take their iPads home; *they are expected to bring it to school each day, fully charged.* At parents' request, MHMS also has the capacity to store and charge some student devices at school.

Because iPads serve as students' textbooks for many high school classes and give them necessary access to Google Classroom, AP Classroom, Clever, and other frequently used education platforms, iPads are needed daily in the high school classroom. While these devices will not be used as the primary means for delivering instruction in grades 9-12, with high-stakes assessments like the ACT and AP exams administered digitally, frequent but intentional practice with the iPads helps prepare students at this level. The iPads provide students a means to complete assignments, conduct research, and access learning materials; at the same time, they give teachers the ability to monitor students in real time and keep them on-task. Students may also receive notifications through the Sumner County Schools App on their iPads regarding upcoming calendar events, assignment deadlines, relevant information for their clubs/sports, etc.

Since high school students are issued an iPad, personal computers such as laptops and other tablets are no longer allowed without written permission from the administration.