

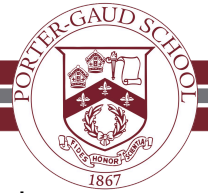
Personal Technology Policy Frequently Asked Questions

Lower School

- **What is the personal technology policy for Lower School students?** Cell phones may not be visible or audible on campus during school hours. Violation of this rule will result in the confiscation of the phone by a teacher or administrator. We also discourage smartwatches in the Lower School. If it is necessary to bring a smartwatch to school, it must be turned off and stored in the student's backpack.
- **What happens if my child comes to school with personal technology?** For the first offense, the device will be confiscated and students can come to the Lower School Office at the end of the day and their devices will be returned to them. For subsequent offenses, parents or caregivers will be called and required to come to school to retrieve the device.

Middle School

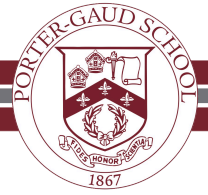
- **What is the personal technology policy for Middle School students?** Students may carry personal technology to and from school, but their use is strictly prohibited during the school day. Personal technology can be used only before 8 a.m. and after 3:10 p.m. unless special, pre-approved provisions have been granted. Each morning, personal technology will continue to be turned into advisors during morning Advisory each morning and retrieved at the end of the day at 3:10 p.m. If a student arrives late to school, cell phones are to be deposited at the front office before heading to class.
- **What happens if a Middle School student is caught using personal technology during the school day?** Violations of these rules involve disciplinary consequences. Failure to turn in a phone is considered a breach of our Honor Code.
- **What if my child needs to reach me during the school day?** We understand that, at times, students need to get in touch with parents or caregivers. In these situations, students may visit the Middle School Office and request to use a school phone. Middle School students also have access to email communication during school hours through their iPads.



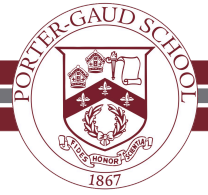
- **What if I want to reach my child during the school day?** We want our students to be engaged in their learning. If you need to contact your child during the school day, please contact the main school number at (843) 556-3620. The Middle School Administrative Assistant can locate your child or pass along messages as needed.

Upper School

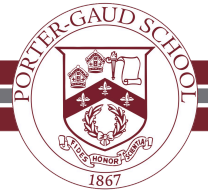
- **When will the policy go into effect and when will my student receive their Yondr pouch?** The new personal technology policy will go into effect on Thursday, January 9, 2025. Students will meet with Upper School administration on January 7 and January 8 during their free periods, study halls, or lunch to receive their Yondr pouch and go through the details of the program.
- **When are students not allowed to use personal technology on campus?** Students may not use personal technology during the school day, which is from 8:20 a.m. - 3:20 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, and from 9 a.m. - 3:20 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays. The use of personal technology during athletics and extracurricular activities that take place outside of the school day is at the discretion of the coach, advisor, or faculty member.
- **What is considered personal technology under this policy?** Our personal technology policy applies to cell phones, tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches, and headphones. Tablets and gaming devices should not be brought to school. Cell phones and smartwatches can be kept in a Yondr pouch. Headphones, including AirPods, must be kept in a backpack and may only be used with the permission of a faculty member for school-specific uses.
- **What happens if a student is caught on their phone during the school day?** If students are caught using personal technology during the school day, they will be asked to give the technology to a faculty member or administrator and it will be stored in the Upper School office until the end of the school day. For the first infraction, the technology can be picked up by the student at the end of the school day. For the second infraction, the school may ask a parent or caregiver to come to the school and pick up the device(s).



- **What is the policy for personal technology policy for field trips, athletic events, and other school-related events?** The use of personal technology during school-sanctioned travel is at the discretion of the chaperones and expectations regarding technology use will be communicated to students and families prior to the event.
- **Will my student be able to unlock their Yondr pouch if they need to check out during the school day or if my senior has senior privileges and is leaving campus?** Any student checking out at the front desk will be able to unlock their Yondr pouch when they check out. Seniors with senior privileges will be able to unlock their pouch when they check out for lunch or their free period at the end of the day. Students arriving to school late will be asked to lock their Yondr pouch when they check in upon arrival to school.
- **What if I need to reach my child during the school day?** We want our students to be engaged in their learning. If you need to contact your child during the school day, please contact the Upper School Office at (843) 556-3620. Upper School students will also have access to email communication during school hours through their laptops, however, they will not be able to access email during academic instruction.
- **What if my student uses a medical device that requires the use of a cell phone?** Porter-Gaud School recognizes that in rare cases, there are medical conditions that require a cell phone or other technology device that needs to be used during the school day. Medical exceptions may be granted in cases where a monitoring device is medically necessary, such as a continuous glucose monitor for diabetes. Proper paperwork, including documentation signed by the treating healthcare provider indicating the need for the medical monitoring device, will be required. All exceptions must be documented and on file with the school nurse and in the student's SchoolDoc health profile. Students with a documented medical exception will receive a Yondr pouch with a velcro closure. Students are expected to keep their phones in the medical Yondr pouch and only use them to adjust their medical device.
- **Will the school still use Remind to communicate with students?** Yes, we will continue to use Remind to share announcements with students. During the school day, Remind messages will be sent to student email accounts on student laptops. Outside of school hours, reminders from coaches, teachers, and administrators may still be viewed on student cell phones based on the student's preferred settings in the Remind app.



- **What if there is a school emergency?** Cell phones during an unfolding emergency have the potential to distract student attention from safety and emergency response directions given to them by staff. They can also spread misinformation about the incident, which could lead to more distractions, rumors, and fear. In the event of a school emergency, we direct our students to safety first, following our school emergency preparedness protocol. We have emergency plans that we practice with our students, faculty, and staff and are fortunate to have Mike Feinberg, our Director of Safety and Security, and the support of the Charleston Police Department's School Resource Officer (SRO) Program. We will communicate with our families via text message and email if there has been an emergency. We will also communicate via the Remind app to any students who may be off campus and let them know when it is safe to return to campus.
- **How long will it take to unlock the pouch at the end of the school day?** The process of unlocking a pouch takes less than five seconds, and we will have 10 unlocking stations for Upper School students at various locations around campus. While we recognize the process may feel a little slow in the first week or two, we anticipate it will get faster as it becomes part of everyone's daily routines.
- **Will my student's technology be safe?** Students will maintain possession of their personal technology for the entire school day. Students are advised to store the pouch in their backpacks.
- **How do you clean the pouch?** The manufacturer recommends one of the following options:
 - Disinfectant Spray or Wipe: Open the pouch and turn it inside out, wipe or spray internal parts, close the pouch, and wipe or spray all external parts.
 - Wash and Air Dry: Close the pouch and wash for 30 minutes using warm or cold water setting with regular detergent. Air dry and avoid using the dryer as heat can lead to damage to the pouch and/or locking mechanism.
- **What if my student forgets to bring their Yondr pouch to school?** Students who forget their Yondr pouch are asked to bring their personal technology to the Upper School office. They can pick up their devices at the end of the school day.
- **What if the pouch gets lost or damaged?** If students damage or lose a pouch, they will be asked to pay a replacement fee of \$50. Damage consists of any signs that the physical integrity of the pouch has been compromised, whether intentional or unintentional, as determined by the school.



- **Are faculty allowed to use personal technology during the school day?** While our faculty and staff will still have access to their personal technology during the school day, we expect everyone to model the same in-person focus on academics and extracurricular activities that we expect from our students.
- **How is the school teaching students about healthy tech habits?** Throughout the school year, Upper School students participate in advisory lessons and assemblies about digital citizenship, media literacy, and online safety. As a part of these conversations, students learn the importance of balancing digital and real-world interactions, setting healthy boundaries, and utilizing social media in ways that support their well-being.
- **How is the school helping students adjust to this change?** In October, students in all three divisions utilized a variety of resources from Common Sense Media and participated in lessons and activities designed to promote a healthy, balanced, and positive approach to media and technology usage. [Click here to see an overview.](#) Last spring, we also hosted Emily Weinstein, co-author of *Behind Their Screens: What Teens are Facing (and What Adults are Missing)*, who spoke with Upper School students about managing your digital footprint and navigating friendships with social media. Looking ahead, we have scheduled a full day of activities with Outward Bound for our ninth-grade students on Monday, January 13. We have also invested in a variety of tech-free activities that students can do during lunch and free periods, including board games and Legos in the Upper School library.
- **What can parents and caregivers do to help students adjust to this change?** We believe that partnering with families is critical for student success and digital well-being and encourage parents and caregivers to talk with students at home about how we can all thrive in an ever-changing digital world. This Tech Habit Challenge is a great starting point for families looking for a fun and meaningful way to engage in conversations about digital wellness.