



# DIGITAL LEARNING (INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL DEVICES)



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the Principal.

## PURPOSE

To ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- our commitment to providing students with the opportunity to benefit from digital technologies to support and enhance learning and development at school.
- expected student behaviour when using digital technologies including the internet, social media, and digital devices (including computers, laptops, tablets)
- the school's commitment to promoting safe, responsible, and discerning use of digital technologies, and educating students on appropriate responses to any dangers or threats to wellbeing that they may encounter when using the internet and digital technologies
- our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour on digital technologies and the internet
- the various Department policies on digital learning, including social media, that our school follows and implements

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and staff at Merri River School.

Staff use of technology is also governed by the following Department policies:

- [Acceptable Use Policy for ICT Resources](#)
- [Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools](#) and
- [Social Media Use to Support Student Learning](#).

Staff, volunteers, and school councillors also need to adhere to codes of conduct relevant to their respective roles. These codes include:

- Merri River School's [Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- [The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct](#) (Teaching staff)
- [Code of Conduct for Victorian Sector Employees](#) (staff)
- [Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities](#) (School councillors)

## DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, “digital technologies” are defined as digital devices, tools, applications, and systems that students and teachers use for learning and teaching; this includes Department-provided software and locally sourced devices, tools and systems.

## POLICY

### Vision for digital learning at our school

Merri River School understands that digital technologies including the internet, apps, computers, and tablets provide students with rich opportunities to support learning and development in a range of ways.

Through increased access to digital technologies, students can benefit from enhanced learning that is interactive, collaborative, personalised and engaging. Digital technologies enable our students to interact with and create high quality content, resources, and tools. It also enables personalised learning tailored to students’ particular needs and interests and transforms assessment, reporting and feedback, driving new forms of collaboration and communication.

Merri River School believes that the use of digital technologies at school allows the development of valuable skills and knowledge and prepares students to thrive in our globalised and inter-connected world. Our school’s vision is to empower students to use digital technologies to reach their personal best and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

### iPads at Merri River School

Classes at Merri River School are delivered with the use of iPads. Students can bring a charged iPad to school each day to be used during class time for different learning activities.

Please note that our school does not have insurance to cover accidental damage to students’ iPads, and parents/carers are encouraged to consider obtaining their own insurance for their child’s iPad.

Merri River School has in place arrangements to support families who may be experiencing long or short-term hardship to access iPads for schoolwork. We also have a number of spare iPads that can be loaned to students in certain circumstances.

### Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies

Digital technology, if not used appropriately, may present risks to users’ safety or wellbeing. At Merri River School, we are committed to educating all students to be safe, responsible, and discerning in the use of digital technologies, equipping them with skills and knowledge to navigate the digital age.

At Merri River School, we:

- use online sites and digital tools that support students’ learning, and focus our use of digital technologies on being learning-centred
- restrict the use of digital technologies in the classroom to specific uses with targeted educational or developmental aims
  - supervise and support students using digital technologies in the classroom
  - effectively and responsively address any issues or incidents that have the potential to impact on the wellbeing of our students
  - have programs in place to educate our students to be promoting safe, responsible, and discerning use of digital technologies, including [insert details of specific programs]
    - educate our students about digital issues such as online privacy, intellectual property and copyright, and the importance of maintaining their own privacy online
    - actively educate and remind students of our *Student Engagement* policy that outlines our school’s values and expected student behaviour, including online behaviours
    - have an Acceptable Use Agreement outlining the expectations of students when using digital technology at school

- use clear protocols and procedures to protect students working in online spaces, which includes reviewing the safety and appropriateness of online tools and communities, removing offensive content at earliest opportunity
  - educate our students on appropriate responses to any dangers or threats to wellbeing that they may encounter when using the internet and other digital technologies
  - provide a filtered internet service to block access to inappropriate content
  - refer suspected illegal online acts to the relevant law enforcement authority for investigation
  - support parents and carers to understand safe and responsible use of digital technologies and the strategies that can be implemented at home through regular updates in our newsletter and annual information sheets.

Distribution of school owned devices to students and personal student use of digital technologies at school will only be permitted where students and their parents/carers have completed a signed Acceptable Use Agreement.

It is the responsibility of all students to protect their own password and not divulge it to another person. If a student or staff member knows or suspects an account has been used by another person, the account holder must immediately notify their classroom teacher.

All messages created, sent or retrieved on the school's network are the property of the school. The school reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the computer system, as necessary and appropriate. Communications including text and images may be required to be disclosed to law enforcement and other third parties without the consent of the sender.

## Social media use

Our school follows the Department's policy on [Social Media Use to Support Learning](#) to ensure social media is used safely and appropriately in student learning and to ensure appropriate parent notification occurs or, where required, consent is sought. Where the student activity is visible to the public, it requires consent.

In accordance with the Department's policy on social media, staff will not 'friend' or 'follow' a student on a personal social media account or accept a 'friend' request from a student using a personal social media account unless it is objectively appropriate, for example where the student is also a family member of the staff.

If a staff member of our school becomes aware that a student at the school is 'following' them on a personal social media account, Department policy requires the staff member to ask the student to 'unfollow' them, and to notify the school and/or parent or carer if the student does not do so.

## Student behavioural expectations

When using digital technologies, students are expected to behave in a way that is consistent with Example School's *Statement of Values, Student Wellbeing and Engagement* policy, and *Bullying Prevention* policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community (including cyberbullying, using digital technologies to harass, threaten or intimidate, or viewing/posting/sharing of inappropriate or unlawful content), Merri River School will institute a staged response, consistent with our student engagement and behaviour policies.

Breaches of this policy by students can result in a number of consequences which will depend on the severity of the breach and the context of the situation. This includes:

- removal of network access privileges

- removal of email privileges
- removal of internet access privileges
- removal of printing privileges
- other consequences as outlined in the school’s Student Wellbeing and Engagement and Bullying Prevention policies.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school’s website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	23/02/2022
Reviewed and Endorsed	15 March 2022 – School Council
Approved by	Principal and School Council [NOTE: School council approval is required for any elements of the policy that involve parent payments for devices]
Next scheduled review date	February 2024

## ANNEXURE A: ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

### School profile statement

At Merri River School we support the right of all members of the school community to access safe and inclusive learning environments, including digital and online spaces. This form outlines the school’s roles and responsibilities in supporting safe digital learning, as well as the expected behaviours we have of our students when using digital or online spaces.

At our School we:

- Have a Student Engagement Policy that outlines our school’s values and expected student behaviour. This Policy includes online behaviours;
- Have programs in place to educate our students to be safe and responsible users of digital technologies.
- Educate our students about digital issues such as online privacy, intellectual property, and copyright.
- Supervise and support students using digital technologies in the classroom.
- Use clear protocols and procedures to protect students working in online spaces. This includes reviewing the safety and appropriateness of online tools and communities, removing offensive content at earliest opportunity, and other measures.
  - See: Duty of Care and Supervision ([www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/p\\_rindutycare.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/p_rindutycare.aspx))

- Provide a filtered internet service to block inappropriate content. We acknowledge, however, that full protection from inappropriate content cannot be guaranteed. VPN apps to be deleted from technological devices.
- Use online sites and digital tools that support students' learning.
- Address issues or incidents that have the potential to impact on the wellbeing of our students.
- Refer suspected illegal online acts to the relevant Law Enforcement authority for investigation.
- Support parents and caregivers to understand safe and responsible use of digital technologies and the strategies that can be implemented at home. The following resources provide current information from both the Department of Education & Training and The Children's ESafety Commission:
  - Bullystoppers Parent Interactive Learning Modules ([www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/parentmodules.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/parentmodules.aspx))
  - iParent | Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner (<https://www.esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent>)

Safe, responsible and behaviour

When I use digital technologies, I **communicate respectfully** by:

- always thinking and checking that what I write, or post is polite and respectful
- being kind to my friends and classmates and thinking about how the things I do or say online might make them feel (*ask students to reflect on how they would feel.*)
- not sending mean, bullying messages, or forwarding them to other people.
- creating and presenting my own work, and if I copy something from online, letting my audience know by sharing the website link to acknowledge the creator.

When I use digital technologies, I **protect personal information** by being aware that my full name, photo, birthday, address, and phone number is personal information and is not to be shared online.

This means I:

- protect my friends' information in the same way
- protect my passwords and do not share them with anyone except my parent
- only ever join spaces with my parents or teacher's guidance and permission
- never answer questions online that ask for my personal information
- know not to post three or more pieces of identifiable information about myself.

When I use digital technologies, I **respect myself and others** by thinking about what I share online.

This means I:

- stop to think about what I post or share online
- use spaces or sites that are appropriate, and if I am not sure I ask a trusted adult for help
- protect my friends' full names, birthdays, school names, addresses and phone numbers because this is their personal information
- speak to a trusted adult if I see something that makes me feel upset or if I need help
- speak to a trusted adult if someone is unkind to me or if I know someone else is upset or scared
- do not deliberately search for something rude or violent
- turn off or close the screen if I see something I do not like and tell a trusted adult
- am careful with the equipment I use.

At school we/I have:

- discussed ways to be a safe, responsible, and ethical user of digital technologies.

- presented my ideas around the ways that I can be a smart, safe, responsible, and ethical user of digital technologies.
- Discuss the inappropriate use of VPN apps.

I will use this knowledge at school and everywhere I use digital technologies

### **1-to-1 program: school owned devices**

#### **Ownership**

- The school retains ownership of the device until the final payment has been completed. At this time ownership of the device will be determined by the school.
- Parents/students should be aware that files stored on the device, or on the school's server, are not private.
- If the student leaves the school prior making final payment, the device must be returned to the school, all previous instalments received will be forfeited to the school.

#### **Damage or loss of equipment**

- All devices and batteries are covered by a manufacturer's warranty. The warranty covers manufacturer's defects and normal use of the device. It does not cover negligence, abuse or malicious damage.
- Any problems, vandalism, damage, loss or theft of the device must be reported immediately to the school.
- Students may be required to replace lost or damaged chargers.
- In the case of suspected theft, a police report must be made by the family and a copy of the report provided to the school.
- If a device is damaged or lost, the principal or their nominee will determine whether replacement is appropriate and/or whether the student retains access to a device for home use.
- Parents are responsible for any damages such as broken screens etc occurring outside of school hours.

#### **User responsibilities**

Students are responsible for:

- bringing portable devices fully charged to school every day
- maintaining virus protection, spam, and filtering settings, set as a standard on the device
- backing up data securely
- always carrying their device in an appropriate protective case
- adhering to this Acceptable Use Agreement when using the machine, both at home and school,

including during lunchtime or when not in the classroom.

### **1-to-1 program: personal devices**

#### **Ownership**

- The device is owned by the parents/student but is made available for use as part of the school learning program.

- Parents/students should be aware that files stored on the device are private but may be publicly accessed as part of learning programs.

### **Software and access**

- The school will provide information about standard software programs and applications required for installation on personal devices and will advise when new software or applications need to be purchased.
- Parents are responsible for purchasing and installing new programs on personal devices. Parents are advised to set up a separate family account (not use their own accounts) to manage purchases for their child's device.

### **School support**

Support **will be** provided for:

- connecting the device to the school network, internet and other digital technologies
- set up and management of school, student email accounts
- all school-based software and associated issues with school applications.

Support **will not** be provided for:

- connecting to home networks, the internet, printers, or other devices
- personal email accounts and settings
- software issues
- hardware issues.

### **Damage or loss of equipment**

- Parents are responsible for making sure the device is covered under their insurance, so that it can be replaced if lost or damaged and student learning is not interrupted.
- The school must be notified if the device is damaged or lost so that a student's learning program is not interrupted whilst being replaced.

### **User responsibilities**

Students are responsible for:

- bringing portable devices fully charged to school every day
- ensuring the device has appropriate virus protection
- backing up data securely
- carrying their device in an appropriate protective case at all times
- adhering to this Acceptable Use Agreement when using the machine, both at home and at school,

including during lunchtime or when not in the classroom.

- Only age-appropriate apps, programs and material is acceptable.

### **Acknowledgment**

This Acceptable Use Agreement applies to all digital technologies and the internet including (although not limited to):

- school owned ICT devices (e.g., desktops, laptops, printers, scanners)
- mobile phones and student owned devices
- email and instant messaging
- internet, intranet
- social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)
- video and photo sharing websites (e.g., YouTube)
- blogs or micro-blogs (e.g., Twitter)
- forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g., Google groups)
- wikis (e.g., Wikipedia)
- vod and podcasts
- video conferences and web conferences.

This Acceptable Use Agreement applies when digital technologies and the internet are being used

at school, during school excursions, camps, and extra-curricular activities, and at home.

**Signature**

I understand that my child needs to comply with the terms of acceptable use and expected standards of behaviour set out within this Agreement.

I understand that there are actions and consequences established within the school's Student Engagement Policy if my child does not behave appropriately.

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_