Merri Creek Primary School

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

Purpose:

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

(a) our commitment to providing students with the opportunity to benefit from digital technologies to support and enhance learning and development at school

(b) expected student behaviour when using digital technologies including the internet, social media, and digital devices (including computers, laptops, tablets)

(c) 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

(d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour on digital technologies and the internet

(e) the various Department policies on digital learning, including social media, that our school follows and implements when using digital technology

(f) that our school prioritises the safety of students whilst they are using digital technologies and will take steps to respond quickly to any cybersecurity incidents in accordance with Department policies.

Scope:

This policy applies to all students and staff at Merri Creek Primary School (MCPS). Staff use of technology is 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.

The Department's Information Security Policy also applies to our school.

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

- MCPS Child Safety Code of Conduct
- 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 being any 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 technology at our school

Merri Creek Primary School understands that safe and appropriate use of digital technologies including the internet, apps, computers and tablets provides students with rich opportunities to support learning and development in a range of ways.

The use of digital technologies is also a mandated component of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

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.

MCPS 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 safely and appropriately to reach their personal best and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

MCPS would like to utilise the capacity of digital technology to support the engagement of children in classroom learning in exceptional circumstances including physical/emotional needs or due to a physical disability.

Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies

Digital technologies, if not used appropriately, may present risks to users' safety or wellbeing. At Merri Creek Primary 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 world.

At Merri Creek Primary School, we:

- use online sites and digital tools that support students' learning, and focus our use of digital technologies on being learning-centred

- use video conference platform, Webex (approved by the Department of Education) in circumstances where deemed appropriate to enhance student connection and access to learning.

- 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. Information on supervision arrangements for students engaging in digital learning activities is available in our Yard Duty and Supervision Policy.

- 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

- educate our students about digital issues such as online privacy, intellectual property and copyright, and the importance of maintaining their own privacy and security online

- actively educate and remind students of our *Student Wellbeing and 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 Department and 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 updates in our newsletter.

Distribution of school owned devices to students for use 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 notify the classroom teacher, or the Assistant Principal as appropriate, immediately.

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.

Use of Personal Devices

Students are not permitted to bring their own personal devices to school (refer to the MCPS Mobile Phones Policy for information specifically about mobile phones). Exception to this policy can be granted by a member of the principal class for the following circumstances:

- For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability or learning difficulty
- Students with a diagnosed health condition

Exceptions must only be granted alongside relevant documentation such as Individualised Learning Plans or Student Health Support Plan.

Where a student has been granted an exception, the student must use their device for the purpose for which the exception was granted, in a safe, ethical and responsible manner and in accordance to the Acceptable Use Agreement.

Social media use

Our school follows the Department's policy on Social Media Use to Support Learning to ensure social media (e.g. Seesaw) 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 Merri Creek Primary 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 Creek Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with our student wellbeing and engagement 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 internet access privileges

- removal of printing privileges

- other consequences as outlined in our Child Safe Code of Conduct, 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 and child safety training processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

Policy Review and Approval:

Policy last reviewed	July 2024
Consultation	Education Sub-Committee of school council: School Council: 14th August 2024 School community via newsletter: 22nd August 2024
Approved by	Principal: August 2024
Next scheduled review date	August 2026

This policy will be reviewed in:	**August 2026**

ANNEXURE A: ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

Acceptable Use Agreement

Part A: School Profile Statement

Cyber safety is an important issue for all students and adults. By the time young children arrive at school many are already online or using digital technologies. They visit their favourite websites, play games and use social media or apps.

Merri Creek Primary School believes the teaching of cyber safety and responsible online behaviour is essential in the lives of students and is best taught in partnership between home and school. 21st century students spend increasing amounts of time online, learning and collaborating. To be safe online and to gain the greatest benefit from the opportunities provided through an online environment, students need to do the right thing by themselves and others online, particularly when no one is watching.

Safe and responsible behaviour is explicitly taught at our school and parents/guardians are asked to support our teaching and work with us by encouraging this behaviour at home. Some online activities are illegal and as such will be reported to police.

In this document, your child is being asked to agree to use the internet, computers (desktops, laptops) and mobile technologies (including iPads, Tablets, cameras and iPods) responsibly at school and at home.

At Merri Creek Primary School we:

* support the rights of all members of the school community to engage in and promote a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment
* have a Student wellbeing and engagement policy that clearly states our school's values and the expected standards of student behaviour, including actions and consequences for inappropriate behaviour
* educate our students to be safe and responsible users of digital technologies
* raise our students' awareness of issues such as online privacy and intellectual property including copyright
* supervise students when using digital technologies for educational purposes
* provide a filtered internet service but acknowledge that full protection from inappropriate content can never be guaranteed
* respond to issues or incidents that have the potential to impact on the wellbeing of our students
* know that some online activities are illegal and as such we are required to report this to the police
* support parents/guardians to understand the importance of safe and responsible use of digital technologies, the potential issues that surround their use and strategies that they can implement at home to support their child
* provide parents/guardians with a copy of this agreement.

The Merri Creek Primary School staff will provide adequate supervision and take steps to minimise the risk of exposure to unsuitable material. If you have any questions, or concerns about this, please don't hesitate to contact the principal or assistant Principal or your child's class teacher.

Part B: Students' Safe and Responsible Behaviour.

When I use digital technologies I:

Communicate respectfully by thinking and checking that what I write or post is polite and respectful.

This means:

* never sending mean or bullying messages or passing them on, as this makes me part of the bullying
* not using actions online to be mean to others. (This can include leaving someone out to make them feel bad)
* not copying someone else's work or ideas from the internet and presenting them as my own. (I will include the link).
* Protect personal information by being *aware that my full name, photo, birthday, address and phone number is personal information and not to be shared online.*

This means:

* protecting my friends' information in the same way

- ∗ protecting my password and not sharing it with others
- ∗ only joining a space online with my parent or teacher's guidance and permission
- ∗ never answering questions online that ask for my personal information.

Look after myself and others by thinking about what I share online.

This means:

- ∗ never sharing my friends' full names, birthdays, school names, addresses and phone numbers because this is their personal information
- ∗ speaking to a trusted adult if I see something that makes me feel upset or if I need help
- ∗ speaking to a trusted adult if someone is unkind to me
- ∗ speaking to a trusted adult if I know someone else is upset or scared
- ∗ stopping to think about what I post or share online
- ∗ using spaces or sites that are right for my age
- ∗ not deliberately searching for something rude or violent
- ∗ either turn off the screen or use the back button if I see something I don't like and telling a trusted adult

Look after our equipment by being mindful of how I am using our learning technologies at school.

This means:

- ∗ never eating or drinking while using equipment
- ∗ carrying our devices with both hands
- ∗ not drawing on, or purposely damaging our equipment
- ∗ letting a teacher know if my device is damaged in some way
- ∗ charging devices after use
- ∗ keeping our devices clean.

For further support with online issues students can call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.

Parents/carers call Parentline 13 22 89 or visit http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/

- ∗ *This document has been developed into age appropriate, student friendly acceptable user agreements for the junior and senior school. These are maintained on our googledrive.*