MERRI RIVER SCHOOL

DIGITAL LEARNING POLICY
(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 and/or Assistant Principal.

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) our school prioritises the safety of students whilst they are using digital technologies

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
- 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

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

Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies, including the internet, apps, computers and tablets, can 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 learning that is interactive, collaborative, personalised, engaging and transformative. 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 safely and appropriately to reach their personal best and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Personal Devices

Students are invited to bring their own device to school each day to be used during class time for different learning activities. When bringing their own device to school, students should ensure that it:

- Is fully charged each morning
- Is brought to school in a protective case

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

Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies

Digital technologies, if not used appropriately, may present risks to users' safety or wellbeing. At Merri River School we are committed to educating all students to use digital technologies safely, equipping students with the skills and knowledge to navigate the digital world.

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
- use digital technologies in the classroom for specific purpose with targeted educational or developmental aims
- supervise and support students using digital technologies for their schoolwork

- 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 safe, responsible and discerning users of digital technologies, including [insert details of specific programs]
- educate our students about digital issues such as privacy, intellectual property and copyright, and the importance of maintaining their own privacy and security 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 technologies for their schoolwork
- use clear protocols and procedures to protect students working in online spaces, which includes reviewing the safety and appropriateness of online tools and communities and removing offensive content at the 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 at school 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 the safe and responsible use of digital technologies and the strategies that can be implemented at home through regular updates in our newsletter, information sheets, website/school portal and information sessions.

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 notify the classroom teacher 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.

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

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 Merri River 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 and child safety training processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums through communication tools

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2022
Consultation	School Council – June 2022
Approved by	Principal and School Council
	Date:
Next scheduled review date	June 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 out 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/prindutycare.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)
  - 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: _____