

MERRI-BEK PRIMARY SCHOOL – NO 2837

DIGITAL LEARNING POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the front office on (03) 9386 2510.

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 including our 1-to-1 personal device program
- 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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Merri-bek Primary School.

Staff use of technology is governed by the 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-bek Primary 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)
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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.

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POLICY

Vision for digital technology at our school

Merri-bek Primary School understands that safe and appropriate use of 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, 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-bek Primary 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.

Laptops at Merri-bek Primary School

Classes at Merri-bek Primary School in years 3 to 6 are delivered with the use of laptops. Students in years 4 to 6 must bring a charged laptop to school each day to be used during class time for different learning activities. Year 3 students will have the use of a laptop at school during the day and the laptop remains at school.

Our school operates a one-to-one device program, which means students in years 4 to 6 must bring their leased laptop with them to school each day. Merri-bek Primary School generally works with a local computer store, which offers discounted prices for the lease of laptops for Merri-bek Primary School students. The 3-year lease of the laptop includes Apple Care and will cover most repairs of the device.

Students are required to bring the leased laptop to school each day and it must be brought to school in a protective case.

Digital technology, if not used appropriately, may present risks to users' safety or wellbeing. At Merri-bek 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 age.

At Merri-bek Primary 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 <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/classroom-resources/cybersmart-challenge/cybersmart-detectives>
- educate our students about digital issues such as online privacy, intellectual property and copyright, and the importance of maintaining their own privacy online

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- 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 notify their home group teacher or team leader 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.

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-bek 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

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content), Merri-bek Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with our policies and the Department's *Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines*.

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
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2022
Consultation	Parent feedback (Parent information night) – Feb 2022 School council – Feb 2022
Approved by	Principal and School Council
Next scheduled review date	February 2023

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ANNEXURE A: ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

Acceptable Use Agreement

Part A: The agreement to be signed by the student and parent.

I will keep myself safe.

- I will not share my password with anyone other than my parents.
- I will not give out any personal information, including my birthday, last name, address, school, picture or phone number.
- I will not upload or download photos or videos or fill out surveys without my parents' permission.
- I will not meet someone in person who I've met online without my parents' permission.
- I will tell my parents or an adult I trust if anything happens online that makes me feel upset, sad or not safe.

I will be a good digital citizen.

- I will not bully anyone online or on my cell phone by sending pictures, sharing videos, spreading gossip, setting up fake profiles or saying cruel things about people.
- I agree not to use technology to cheat in games or on schoolwork.
- I agree to tell my parents if I see something that is inappropriate.

I will think first.

- I will make smart decisions about what I watch, play and send, and will ask my parents if I'm not sure what's appropriate.
- If my family has rules about ratings, I will follow them.
- I know that not everything I read, hear or see online is true.

I will keep a healthy balance.

- I will help my parents set time limits that make sense, and then I will follow them.
- I will recognize that my safety is more important to them than anything else.
- I will continue to enjoy the other things — and people — in my life.

In exchange, my parents agree to:

- Recognize that media is a big part of my life, even if they don't always understand why.
- Before saying "no" talk with me about what worries them and why.
- Talk to me about my interests and help me find stuff that's appropriate and fun.

Student Name: Student Signature:

Parent Permission

I agree to allow my child to use the Internet at school. I have discussed the scenarios, potential problems and responsible use of the Internet with him/her as outlined in the Internet use kit.

I will contact the school if there is anything here that I do not understand. If there is a situation which concerns me, I will contact either the school or ACMA Australia's Internet safety advisory body on 1800 880 176.

Parent/Guardian Signature:Date:

Approved: 17th March 2023

Next Review Date: March 2026

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Part B –The school’s support for responsible and ethical use of technology

Merri-bek Primary School uses the Internet as a teaching and learning tool. We see the Internet and mobile technology as valuable resources but acknowledge they must be used responsibly.

Your child has been asked to agree to use the Internet and Mobile technology responsibly at school. Parents should be aware that the nature of the Internet means that full protection from inappropriate content can never be guaranteed.

At Merri-bek Primary School we:

- have a cyber safe and responsible use program across the school. We reinforce the school code of conduct, values and behaviours when using technology and the internet
- provide a filtered Internet service
- provide supervision and direction in Internet activities and when using mobile technologies for learning
- utilise mobile technologies for educational purpose e.g. Podcasts, photos from excursions
- work towards setting tasks that ask your child open questions, so they can’t copy and paste all answers from the Internet
- provide support to parents to understand this agreement (e.g. language support)
- provide support to parents through information evenings and a document attached to this agreement.
- Involve all students in Grades 3 and 4 in a DET recommended and funded initiative to provide safe access to communication forums both local and overseas.



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Part C - Advice for Parents

Please keep this as a resource to use at home

At school the Internet is mostly used to support teaching and learning. At home, however, it is often used differently. Not only is it a study resource for students, but it is increasingly being used as a social space to meet, play and chat. The Internet can be lots of fun.

If you have the Internet at home, encourage your child to show you what they are doing online. If not, see if you can make a time to visit the school to see their work and how the school uses the Internet.

Bullying, stranger danger, gossip, telling the wrong people personal information about yourself have long been issues for young people growing up. These are all behaviours which now present online. These are not “Virtual” Issues. They are real and can harm and hurt.

At home we recommend you:

- make some time to sit with your child to find out how they are using the Internet and who else is involved in any online activities
- ask them to give you a tour of their “space” if they are using a site which allows them to chat, publish photos, play games etc
- always get them to set the space to “Private” if they use a social networking site like Myspace, Bebo, Pixa etc – They are then in control of who contacts them and who accesses their information. They can block out anyone at any time.
- have the computer with Internet access in a shared place in the house – not your child’s bedroom
- negotiate appropriate times for your child’s online activities and use of mobile phones.
- ask questions when your child shows you what they are doing
- how does it work and how do you set it up? Can you block out people?
- who else is sharing this space or game - did you know them before or “meet” them online? What do you know about them?
- why is this so enjoyable – what makes it fun?
- can you see any risks or dangers in the activity - what would you say to warn/inform a younger child who was going to start to use the space?
- what are you doing to protect yourself or your friends from these potential dangers?
- when would you inform an adult about an incident that has happened online that concerns you? Discuss why your child might keep it to themselves.

Many students say they will not tell an adult they are in trouble or ask for help because:

- they might get the blame for any incident
- they don’t think adults “get” their online stuff – it is for students only
- they might put at risk their own access to technology by either:
 - admitting to a mistake or
 - highlighting a situation that might lead a parent to ban their access. (Even to protect them)



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- Support information for parents around the agreement.

When I use technology, both at school and at home I have responsibilities and rules to follow.

Merri-bek Primary School sees the education of safe and ethical cybercitizens as essential in the lives of its students and as a partnership between home and school.

21st Century students spend increasing amounts of time online learning and socialising. These online communities need Cybercitizens who “do the right thing” by themselves and others online, particularly when “no one is watching”.

Safe and ethical behaviour online is explicitly taught at our school and the request is support at home.

It is important to note that some online activities are illegal and as such will be reported to police. This includes harassment of others, publishing inappropriate images etc.

Behave in a way outlined in the school’s Code of Conduct

The school’s Code of Conduct is not only the rules of the school but also the desired behaviours and values your school community believe are important for all of the students at your school.

Not giving out personal details or details of other students including full names, telephone numbers, addresses and images and protecting password details.

Students can be approached, groomed, and bullied online. They love to publish information about themselves and their friends in spaces like Minecraft, Facebook, YouTube blogs, Club Penguin etc.

We recommend that they:

- don’t use their own name, but develop an online name and use avatars where available
- don’t share personal details including images of themselves or their friends online
- password-protect any spaces or accounts they have and never share that password
- don’t allow anyone they don’t know to join their chat or collaborative space. Use the block feature
- are reminded that any image or comment they put on the internet is now public (anyone can see, change or use it) **Once it is published, they have lost control of it.**

Being respectful online and not participating in online bullying or hurtful behaviour.

The online environment sometimes feels different. The language is different. Sometimes students say things online that they would never say to someone’s face. Not all altercations are bullying but unacceptable behaviours need to be addressed.

- being online can make students feel that they are anonymous (however online interactions can be traced)
- the space or chat they use in leisure time might have explicit language and they will feel they have to be part of it
- often the online environment has very few adults
- participation in bullying or hurtful actions can take many forms in the online world. Forwarding the messages, telling others where to go and see any published images, content which has been deliberately posted to humiliate another person is all part of how a child can participate and contribute to hurting or bullying another child
- deliberate exclusion of another in an online space is another way some students hurt each other online. It is important that the behaviours are discussed as separate from the technologies.



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Using the technology at school for learning, using the equipment properly and not interfering with the work or data of another student

By just taking care with the equipment, printing and downloading from the internet students can save time, money and the environment. Students often see the internet as “free.” Just looking at a page on the internet is a download and is charged somewhere. The repair and support of the school’s technology is another issue and as many computers are shared at school, their care is important.

Not bringing or downloading unauthorised programs, including games, to school or run them on school computers

The school connects all of the computers through a network. The introduction of unknown games or files could introduce viruses etc and these put all of the school’s equipment and student work at risk. The first virus to be written for a Macintosh was discovered in February 2009.

Not go looking for rude or offensive sites.

Filters block a lot of inappropriate content but they are not foolproof. For students who deliberately seek out inappropriate content or use technology that bypasses filters, parents will be immediately informed and the student's internet access will be reviewed with the option of suspension of use for a period of time.

Using the Internet / mobile technology at school to learn.

It is important to realise that there is a time for fun and a time for work (even on the internet). Staying on task will reduce risk of inappropriate access and teach students strategies to use the internet or mobile technologies for their learning.

Remembering that the content on the web is someone else’s property so ask a teacher for help to get permission before using information or pictures

All music, information, images and games on the internet are owned by someone. The term copyright is a legal one and there are laws to enforce it.

By downloading a freebie you can risk bringing a virus or spyware to the computer or system. These can destroy a computer system or provide hackers with details such as passwords and bank accounts. **Remember if an offer is too good to be true, the chances are it is!**

Thinking carefully about what is on the internet, questioning if it is from a reliable source and using the information to help answer questions.

Not everything on the internet is true, accurate or unbiased.

The school is teaching information literacy skills, which enables students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively on the internet.

Copying and pasting information can help organise arguments, ideas, and information but it is important that your child uses their own thoughts and language to express what they have learnt. If helping with homework ask open-ended questions. “Tell me about wombats” might encourage him/her to copy and paste facts / images etc about the wombat but asking the question “What would a day in the life of a wombat be like?” encourages the student to think about different aspects of the animal’s life and draw together the different pieces of information they might have discovered.

Talk to my teacher or another adult if I need help or see something I don’t like online etc...



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The internet has some really flashy and tricky ways to lead people into websites they never meant to visit. It is easy for us all to get distracted. We want students to ask for help in locating the information they need and clarifying the task they have been set. Unfocused clicking through websites can lead to inappropriate content.

Open communication between parents, teachers and students is the best way to keep students safe. Students will often share concerns with each other online. It is important that they tell a teacher and or parent when they are feeling uncomfortable or threatened online.

If you have any concerns about this agreement or internet safety, contact the school or call 1800 880 176 or visit http://www.cybersmartkids.com.au/for-parents_tips.htm or email: connect.manager@education.vic.gov.au.

Questions for teacher/ parent/ student discussion:

What can you do?

- You found the car picture you were searching for, but on top of it was a naked lady!
- Someone keeps messaging nasty and upsetting comments about you and your friends on your mobile phone and online.
- A person you have met online asks you to give them your full name and phone number and suggests you meet. What if you have chatted with them for a long time?
- You are sent a message which has been forwarded by someone else. It has embarrassing comments /image about someone you know.
- A game online will only let you play it if you give your name, address, phone number, DOB etc