

Digital Learning (Internet, Social Media and Digital Devices)



Waratah Special Developmental School



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office on 9474 8700

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

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Waratah SDS.

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:

- Waratah SDS'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 technology at our school

Waratah SDS understands that safe and appropriate use of digital technologies including the internet, applications, computers, tablets and communication devices 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 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.

Waratah SDS 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 interconnected 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.

Communication Devices at Waratah SDS

Some students have their own iPad or electronic communication device that they bring to school to support their communication. School staff work in collaboration with parents/carers, and private therapists and doctors to support students to use these devices.

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 iPad.

Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies

Digital technology, if not used appropriately, may present risks to users’ safety or wellbeing. At Waratah SDS, 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 Waratah SDS, 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
- educate our students about digital issues such as online privacy 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.

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 Waratah SDS'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), Waratah SDS 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 sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in the school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

RELEVANT LINKS

- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/cyberbullyingcampaign.aspx>
- <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/blog/covid-19-keeping-schools-and-learning-safe-online>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/digital-learning/policy>

RELATED POLICIES

- Bullying Prevention and Response
- Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies
- Duty of Care
- ICT Infrastructure Backup and Recovery — Schools
- ICT Support for Schools
- Information Security — Infosafe
- Intellectual Property and Copyright
- Mobile Phones — Student Use
- Parent Payments
- Photographing, Filming and Recording Students
- Privacy and Information Sharing
- Social Media Use to Support Student Learning

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2024
Consultation	Via Seesaw 31/7/24 and via school newsletter Term 3 week 3 2024
Approved by	Principal and School Council
Next scheduled review date	July 2026

ANNEXURE A: ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

WARATAH
SPECIAL
DEVELOPMENTAL
SCHOOL



Waratah SDS Cyber Safe Expected Behaviours

When I use digital technologies, I:

Show Respect

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

This means:

- Never sending mean or hurtful messages or emails.
- Never sending or using photos of my friends or family without asking them.
- Asking to post other people's photos.

Act Safely

Protect personal information (name, address, date of birth etc).

This means:

- Always asking an adult before putting my personal information online.
- Never putting my friends or families information online.
- Protecting my password and not sharing it with others.
- Always asking a parent or teacher before joining a space online.
- Never answering questions online that ask for my person information.

Act Responsibly

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

This means:

- Speaking to a teacher or parent/carer if I see something that makes me feel upset or if I need help.
- Speaking to a teacher or parent/carer if someone is mean to me.
- Speaking to a teacher or parent/carer if someone 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.
- Turning off the screen or using the back button if I see something I do not like and telling a teacher or a parent/carer.
- Being careful with the equipment I use.

I agree with these terms and conditions.

Name: _____

Date: _____/_____/202_