

Policy

This document defines the policy for school students of the NSW Department of Education and Communities for Advice to NSW public school communities on managing student use of digital devices and online services, including restricting access.

Policy statement

This policy covers student use of digital devices (personal or school provided) and online services in school-related settings, specifically on school grounds, at school-related activities and outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and student conduct.

Every school is required to complete a school digital devices and online services procedure that aligns with this policy, as well as accepted school practices and requirements.

Primary school students must not use digital devices during class, at recess and at lunch unless approved by a principal or teacher. Exemptions may be granted by a principal or teacher, including allowing students to use a device for an educational purpose, or as part of a reasonable adjustment for student learning and wellbeing.

Secondary school principals, in consultation with their school community, can restrict or permit student use of digital devices and online services in all school-related settings, including at recess and lunch.

School staff are required to consider the needs of their students and their school community when developing their school procedure, including making reasonable adjustments and considering exemptions for individual students.

Parents, carers, and, if appropriate, students themselves, can request the principal to provide an exemption from parts of this policy or the school procedure.

Principals, in consultation with their school communities, can make decisions about participating in and implementation of a bring your own device program.

Principals are to consult students, parents, carers and school staff when developing their school procedure. The Student Representative Council and the P&C Association may be consulted as appropriate.

School staff should manage and report incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services in accordance with school procedure, departmental policy and any statutory and regulatory obligations to help prevent any further incidents and provide support where required.

If a student, parent or carer has any complaints relating to this policy, they should first follow the school's complaints process. If the issue cannot be resolved, please refer to the guide for students/ parents/ carers about making a complaint about our schools. The department's Complaints Handling Policy and procedures also provide information and links to other resources to support staff in managing complaints effectively.

Audience and applicability

All NSW public schools and students.

Context

The department provides guidelines, procedures and safe and secure technology-related resources, equipment and infrastructure to help protect students from harm and create environments where students can benefit from using technology.

Digital devices and online services are an important part of everyday life, shaping the way children and young people learn, communicate, work and play. Learning environments, at school and at home, should support students to develop technological, social and emotional competencies. This support should maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of digital environments, and prepare students for life beyond school.





Student use of digital devices and online services

Student use of digital devices and online services in schools is intended to enhance learning, wellbeing and educational attainment. Digital devices and online services can help students develop the skills needed for digital literacy, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal relationships and collaboration.

Digital devices and online services may form part of the reasonable adjustments provided to a student to enable them to participate in school on the same basis as their peers.

Digital devices and online services may cause harm if used inappropriately, such as to bully or intimidate others or gain access to and share inappropriate content.

The department does what it reasonably can to provide safe and secure access to school resources, equipment and infrastructure, including internet connectivity, for students at school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant departmental policies, procedures and guidelines.

Responsibilities and delegations

Students' safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services is the shared responsibility of students, parents, carers and school staff.

Students:

- use digital devices and online services in safe, responsible and respectful ways, as described in their school procedures and the Behaviour Code for Students, and support their peers to do the same.

Parents and carers:

- recognise the role they play in educating their children and modelling the behaviours that underpin the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services
- support implementation of the school procedure, including its approach to resolving issues
- take responsibility for their child's use of digital devices and online services at home
- communicate with school staff and the school community respectfully and collaboratively, as outlined in the 2018 [School Community Charter](#).

Teachers:

- model appropriate use of digital devices and online services in line with departmental policy;
- establish strategies and practices consistent with their school's procedures and deliver learning experiences to encourage appropriate use of digital devices and online services
- respond to and report any breaches and incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services as required by school procedures, departmental policy and any statutory and regulatory requirements
- support parents and carers to understand the strategies that can be employed to promote their children's safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services;
- participate in professional development related to this policy.

Non-teaching staff, including volunteers and contracted staff engaged by schools:

- be aware of the policy and act in line with the conduct described in it
- report any inappropriate use of digital devices and online services to the principal, school executive or staff.

Principals:

- maintain a positive school culture that includes and promotes safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services
- develop and implement a school procedure in consultation with school staff, students, parents and carers
- inform staff, including new and casual staff, about school-based procedures
- model appropriate use of digital devices and online services in line with departmental policy
- respond to and report any breaches and incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services as required by school procedures, departmental policy and any statutory and regulatory requirements
- support parents and carers understand the strategies that will promote their children's safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services



Student use of digital devices and online services

- provide teachers and other school staff with support and professional development in appropriate use of digital devices and online services and implementation of their school procedure
- monitor and periodically review the suitability of their school procedure.

Directors, educational leadership:

- support principals to comply with this policy.

Monitoring and review

- The Director, Learning Design and Development (Educational Services) and Director IT Service Operations and Security (Information Technology Directorate) are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and reviewing its effectiveness at least every three years.

Policy contact officer

- Director, Learning Design and Development
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Key terms

Digital citizenship refers to the skills and knowledge a person needs to effectively use digital technologies in a positive way so they can participate in society, communicate with others, and create and consume digital content.

Digital devices are electronic devices that can receive, store, process and share digital information and connect to applications (apps), websites and other online services. They include desktop **computers, laptops, tablets, smartwatches, smartphones, mobile phones and other devices.**

Digital literacy is the set of social, emotional and technological skills and competencies that people need to understand to use digital devices and online services, and to expand their opportunities for education, employment and social participation, including entertainment.

Educational purpose is any use approved by school staff that supports student learning, wellbeing and educational outcomes. General capabilities are the broad collection of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions described within the Australian curriculum and NSW syllabus. Image-based abuse occurs when intimate, nude or sexual images are distributed, or threatened to be distributed, without the consent of those pictured. This includes real, altered and drawn pictures and videos. This is a crime in NSW.

Online bullying involves using technology such as the internet or mobile devices to bully someone. Bullying behaviour has three key features. It involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship. It is ongoing and repeated, and it involves behaviours that can cause harm. Bullying behaviour can also involve intimidation, victimisation and harassment, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

Online safety is the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital media, devices, other technology and online services. Online services are any software, website or application that can gather, process or communicate information. This includes digital classrooms, chat and messaging, online games, virtual reality, social media and other online spaces. Reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students.

School-related settings include school grounds, school-related activities and outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This connection may exist in situations where: there is discussion about school taking place outside of school hours; a student is wearing their school uniform but is not on school premises; a relationship between parties commenced at school; students are online in digital classrooms; and where online contact has flow on consequences at school and duty of care requires the school to respond once an incident is reported.

School staff refers to school personnel who have some level of responsibility for implementing policy and the school digital devices and online service procedure. This includes principals, senior staff, teachers, non-teaching staff, school administrative staff, volunteers and contracted staff engaged by schools.



Procedures

Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Procedure

Purpose

This procedure guides student use of digital devices and online services at our school.

Our school acknowledges the educational value of digital devices and online services in supporting and enhancing educational outcomes and student wellbeing. We also recognise they may cause harm if used inappropriately and that we need to support our students to use them in safe, responsible and respectful ways.

Scope

This procedure provides a consistent framework for the safe, responsible and respectful use of all digital devices and online services by students in our school. It sets out the shared responsibilities of school staff, students and parents and carers. It also provides a framework to manage potential risks to student safety and wellbeing.

This procedure covers student use of digital devices and online services in school-related settings, including **on school grounds, at school-related activities including excursions and overnight camps, and outside of school** where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This procedure covers the use of school-provided and personal digital devices (mobile phones, smart watches and any other digital device that can receive, store, process and share digital information) and all online services.

Our School's Approach

At Parklea Public School we value the use of digital technologies to support our students achievement and recognize the opportunities that these devices enable to develop critical and creative thinkers who can achieve individualized goals in an everchanging world. This belief has guided us to introduce 1:1 devices for all students in our school. The use of these devices is monitored by the classroom and specialist teachers and is only used in educationally valuable situations. These devices are not to be used before or after school hours, during recess or lunch breaks and must remain on school grounds, unless extenuating circumstances and changes need to be made to support student's needs.

The only digital devices and online services to be used during school hours are those that are monitored and chosen by the classroom teachers. No other devices will be used by students during class, at recess and at lunch.

If students are bringing their own digital devices to school, including mobile phones and smart watches that can connect to online services, it is important that this is declared to the student's classroom teacher. These devices must be switched off and kept in students bags at all times. No digital devices will be taken on excursions, incursions and school camps, for the purposes of taking photos it is recommended your child take a disposal camera or polaroid camera. Parents and students are reminded that students who bring their own devices to school do so at their own risk and the school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage of these.

Any inappropriate use of digital devices and online services including:

- Bullying;
- Intimidation;
- Harassment;
- Recording of students and staff;
- Downloading/viewing of inappropriate material;

will incur consequences suited to the extent of the misuse.

Exemptions

Exemptions to any part of this procedure may apply for some students in some circumstances. Parents and carers can request an exemption and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis and granted when required by law or at the principal's discretion.

Use of digital devices will be permitted at recess, lunch and during class-time **if** a student requires a digital device or online service for **medical reasons** or for reasonable adjustments made **as part of their individual education plan**.



Consequences for inappropriate use

If students are bringing their own devices to school and are using them inappropriately the following actions may be employed:

- Student discipline measures that follow the school positive behavior for learning protocols.
- Confiscating from the individual and a parent/carer will need to collect it from an executive team member.
- Reporting the matter to the police.

Contact between students and parents and carers during the school day

Should a student need to make a call during the school day, they must:

- approach the administration office and ask for permission to use the school's phone;

During school hours, parents and carers are expected to only contact their children via the school office.

Responsibilities and obligations

For students

- Be safe, responsible and respectful users of digital devices and online services, and support their peers to be the same.
- Respect and follow school rules and procedures and the decisions made by staff, knowing that other schools may have different arrangements.
- Communicate respectfully and collaboratively with peers, school staff and the school community and behave in the ways described in the Behavior Code for Students.

For parents and carers

- Recognise the role they play in educating their children and modelling the behaviors that underpin the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services.
- Support implementation of the school procedure, including its approach to resolving issues.
- Take responsibility for their child's use of digital devices and online services at home such as use of online services with age and content restrictions.
- Switch off or put their digital devices on silent when at official school functions, during meetings and when assisting in the classroom.
- Provide digital devices that meet school specifications where a school is participating in a bring your own device program and complete any related paperwork.

For the principal and teachers

- Deliver learning experiences that encourage safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services. This includes:
 - Establishing agreed classroom expectations for using digital devices and online services, in line with this procedure and departmental policy.
 - Identifying strategies to ensure that all students are able to engage in classroom activities including strategies to accommodate students without a digital device.
 - Reading and abiding by the Terms of Service for any online services they use in teaching, including those limiting use by age.
 - Educating students about online privacy, intellectual property, copyright, digital literacy and other online safety related issues.
- Model appropriate use of digital devices and online services in line with departmental policy.
- Respond to and report any breaches and incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services as required by school procedures, departmental policy and any statutory and regulatory requirements. This includes:
 - Reporting the creation, possession or distribution of indecent or offensive material to the Incident Support and Report hotline as required by the Incident Notification and Response Policy and Procedures and consider any mandatory reporting requirements.
 - Working with the department and the Office of the eSafety Commissioner (if necessary) to resolve cases of serious online bullying and image-based abuse.
 - Following the school's behaviour management plan when responding to any incident of inappropriate student behaviour relating to the use of digital devices or online services.
- If feasible and particularly as issues emerge, support parents and carers to understand strategies that promote their children's safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services.



- Participate in professional development related to appropriate use of digital devices and online services.

For non-teaching staff, volunteers and contractors

- Be aware of the department's policy, this procedure and act in line with the conduct described.
- Report any inappropriate use of digital devices and online services to the principal, school executive or school staff they are working with.

Complaints

If a student, parent or carer has a complaint under this procedure, they should first follow our school's complaint process. If the issue cannot be resolved, please refer to the department's guide for students/ parents/ carers about making a complaint about our schools.

Review

The principal or delegated staff will review this procedure annually.

Behaviour Code for Students

Be SAFE

- Protect your personal information, including your name, address, school, email address, telephone number, pictures of you and other personal details.
- Only use your own usernames and passwords, and never share them with others.
- Ask a teacher or other responsible adult for help if anyone online asks for your personal information, wants to meet you or offers you money or gifts.
- Let a teacher or other responsible adult know immediately if you find anything online that is suspicious, harmful, inappropriate or makes you uncomfortable.
- Never hack, disable or bypass any hardware or software security, including any virus protection, spam and filter settings.

Be RESPONSIBLE

- Follow all school rules and instructions from school staff, including when using digital devices and online services.
- Take care with the digital devices you use.
 - Take care with the school-owned devices you share with others, so that other people can use them after you.
- Use online services in responsible and age-appropriate ways.
 - Only use online services in the ways agreed to with your teacher.
 - Only access appropriate content and websites, including when using the school's filtered network and personal, unfiltered networks.
 - Do not use online services to buy or sell things online, to gamble or to do anything that breaks the law.
- Understand that everything done on the school's network is monitored and can be used in investigations.

Be RESPECTFUL

- Respect and protect the privacy, safety and wellbeing of others.
- Do not share anyone else's personal information.
- Get permission before you take a photo or video of someone, including from the person and from a teacher.
- Do not harass or bully other students, school staff or anyone, this includes cyberbullying using a digital device or online service.
- Do not send or share messages or content that could cause harm, including things that might be:
 - inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
 - upsetting or embarrassing to another person or group;
 - considered bullying;
 - private or confidential; and/or
 - a virus or other harmful software.

