

DIGITAL LEARNING

(INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL DEVICES)



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact 5334 1302

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 Ballarat Specialist 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:

- [Ballarat Specialist 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 Ballarat Specialist 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.

Ballarat Specialist 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.

Devices at Ballarat Specialist School

Ballarat Specialist School provides students with access to digital devices when needed to support their learning and/or communication. These devices remain at the school except in special circumstances—e.g. for students with augmented communication needs. Some students have State School Relief supplied iPads. These are individually assigned to the student, but are otherwise treated as school-owned.

Devices in the school are either sourced from classroom trolleys or are individually assigned in the case of students with augmented communication needs.

Students use of digital devices is carefully supervised. Students who use devices inappropriately may be refused access to the device, with the exception of students who use devices for communication.

Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies

Digital technologies, if not used appropriately, may present risks to users' safety or wellbeing. At Ballarat Specialist 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 Ballarat Specialist 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
- use digital technologies such as Proloquo2Go to support students' communication needs
- 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

- 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 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 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

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 Graeme Shae 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.

Ballarat Specialist School follows the Department's [Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Technologies](#) Policy with respect to supervision of students using digital devices.

All digital technology use in the classroom is carefully supervised by classroom staff. Students are never permitted to create accounts to access technology that requests personal information beyond their school email address.

Social media use

At Ballarat Specialist School, social media is not used to support learning.

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.

ChatGPT and other AI tools use

At Ballarat Specialist School, ChatGPT and other generative AI tools are not permitted to be used on school devices. Staff and students must not enter any personal information about students or staff onto these digital platforms when using the tools privately.

Student behavioural expectations

When using digital technologies, students are expected to behave in a way that is consistent with Ballarat Specialist 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), Ballarat Specialist 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:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction and child safety training processes
- Included in our staff handbook
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Cybersafety and Responsible Use of Technologies](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)
- [Supervision of Students](#)
- [Acceptable Use Policy for ICT Resources](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools](#)
- [Social Media Use to Support Student Learning](#)

BSS Policies:

- BSS Statement of Values
- BSS Student Engagement and Wellbeing policy
- BSS Bullying Prevention policy
- BSS Child Safe policies
- BSS Duty of Care policy
- BSS Parent Payments policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	10/23
Consultation	School council– 06/23 Wider school community—ongoing via school website
Approved by	Principal

Next scheduled review date	10/25
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