



DIGITAL LEARNING **(INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL DEVICES)**

PURPOSE

To ensure that all students and members of the Northern School for Autism 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
- (f) our school prioritises the safety of students whilst they are using digital technologies

To support the school in implementing the ICT and digital technologies component of the curriculum in a safe, balanced and appropriate way, that supports and enables learning.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and staff at the Northern School for Autism.

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:

- Northern School for Autism'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.

POLICY

Vision for digital technology at our school

Northern School for Autism understands that the 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.

Northern School for Autism believes that the use of digital technologies 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 at Northern School for Autism

Northern School for Autism does not operate a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Program.

Northern School for Autism does provide students with access to electronic devices such as laptop computers or tablets that have been school purchased, to participate in technology-enabled learning.

Some students may need bring their own Personal Communication Devices to be able to interact with their learning and to communicate their needs.

In this 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.

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Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies

Digital technologies, if not used appropriately, may present risks to users' safety or wellbeing. At Northern School for Autism, we are committed to educating all students to be safe, responsible and discerning in the use of digital technologies, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to navigate the digital world.

At Northern School for Autism, 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 for their schoolwork and communication
- 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 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 & Engagement* policy that outlines our School's values and expected student behaviour
- 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

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 or The ICT Manager 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.

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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 Northern School for Autism's *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*, *Student Engagement & Wellbeing Policy* and the *Bullying Prevention & Response 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), Northern School for Autism 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 & Engagement* and the *Bullying Prevention & Response* 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
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

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FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Reference:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/digital-learning>

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/social-media/policy>

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/personal-devices/policy>

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/cybersafety/policy>

Please refer also to the school's *Personal Devices –Access Policy, Safe Use of Technology, Esmart and Internet Policy and Child Safe Standards*

REVIEW AND APPROVAL

A mandatory policy

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	26 July 2022 to School Council for Consultation
Approved by	Principal and School Council Noting at School Council Meeting 4 Aug 2022
Next scheduled review date	July 2024 - <i>the mandatory review cycle for this policy is 2 years or if guidelines change</i>

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