

Mernda Hills Christian College

Digital Technologies Policy and Procedures



Document Control

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Gilson College – Mernda					
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0	May 2023	Jan 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Policy 	Exec Leaders	Exec Leaders

Rationale

Internet, computers and mobile technologies are valuable educational tools for collecting and disseminating information. They can be used by students to achieve a wide range of education outcomes.

Aims

To ensure students and staff are informed regarding the safe and appropriate practices relating to the use of the internet, computers and mobile technologies.

Implementation - Acceptable Use Conditions

Part A - Student use of technology (at school and at home)

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

I agree to:

- be a safe user whenever and wherever I use that technology
- be a responsible user whenever and wherever I use technology and support others by being respectful in how I talk to and work or socialise with them and never write or participate in online bullying (this includes forwarding messages and supporting others in harmful, inappropriate, or hurtful online behaviour)
- report to an adult if I feel uncomfortable or unsafe online or see others participating in unsafe, inappropriate, or hurtful online behaviour

When at school I agree to:

- behave according to my school's Code of Conduct
- protect my privacy rights and those of other students by not giving out personal details including full names, telephone numbers, addresses and images
- use appropriate language when talking to and working with others online and never participate in hate mail or acts of bullying, harassment, or racism
- use the internet at school for educational purposes and use the equipment properly
- use social networking sites for educational purposes and only as directed by teachers
- not deliberately enter or remain in any site that has obscene language or offensive content (e.g. racist material or violent images)
- abide by copyright procedures when using content on websites (ask permission to use images, text, audio, and video and cite references where necessary)
- think about how I use content posted on the internet and not simply copy and paste information from websites
- not interfere with network security, the data of another user or attempt to log into the network with a username or password of another student
- not reveal my password to anyone except the system administrator or classroom teachers
- not bring, download, access or play unauthorised programs, including games, to the school or run them on personal or school computers
- talk to my teacher or another adult if:
 - I need help online
 - I feel that the safety or wellbeing of other students at the school is being threatened
 - I come across sites which are not suitable for our school
 - someone writes something I don't like, or makes me and my friends feel unsafe or uncomfortable or asks me to provide information that I know is private.

The school does not generally allow mobile phones and other personal devices to be used at school.

Upon the teacher's discretion, students may be permitted to use their phones. In such circumstances, I agree to:

- use it only for learning purposes as directed by my teacher

- act responsibly and not use the device to find, create or send information that might be harmful, inappropriate, or hurtful to me or anyone else.
- protect the privacy of others and never post private information about another person

When given permission by the teacher to use my mobile device as a camera I will:

- only take photos and record sound or video when it is part of a class or lesson
- seek permission from individuals involved before taking photos, recording sound or videoing them (including teachers)
- seek written permission from individuals involved before publishing or sending photos, recorded sound, or video to anyone else or to any online space
- respect others when I talk to and work with them online and never write or participate in online bullying or harassment
- seek written permission from the school administration before uploading any content to websites (e.g. blogs)

This Acceptable Use Policy for Internet, Computers and Mobile Devices also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities.

ICT Acceptable Use Agreement

By enrolling at Mernda Hills Christian College, every student agrees to abide by this policy, the *Internet Acceptable Use Policy* and student *ICT Acceptable Use Agreement*. Because technology is such an integral part of the school program, a student not wishing to abide by this policy, the *Internet Acceptable Use Policy* and *ICT Acceptable Use Agreement* will have their enrolment at the college reviewed.

Part B - The schools' support for responsible and ethical use of digital technology.

Mernda Hills Christian College 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 and ethically

Students are expected to use the internet and mobile technology responsibly and ethically at school.

Parents should be aware that the nature of the internet is such that full protection from inappropriate content can never be guaranteed.

At Mernda Hills Christian College we:

- reinforce the values of Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Learning, the Child Safe Protection Code of Conduct our Internet Acceptable Use Policy, and ICT Acceptable Use Agreements when students use technology and the internet
- provide a filtered internet service
- provide supervision and direction in internet activities and when using mobile technologies for specific learning
- use technology for educational purposes
- work towards setting tasks that ask students 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

Part C - Advice for Parents

Mernda Hills Christian College believes the teaching of cyber safe and ethical online behaviour is essential in the lives of students and is best taught in 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 with others online, particularly when no one is watching.

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

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

Any images or recordings taken of Mernda Hills Christian College students at school events or activities are the property of the school. Written permission from the Principal must be obtained prior to any recordings or images being published.

Please note: if a student is suspected of breaching this policy the device may be examined. This is inclusive of emails, computer and network files, cache files, internet history, internet favourites, downloads or any other information stored on the computer that constitutes a breach of this policy.

Bridging the gap between home and school:

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 also it is increasingly being used as a social space to meet and chat.

We encourage your child to show you what they are doing online when using the internet at home.

At home, we recommend you

- find out how your child uses the internet and who else is involved in any online activities
- have the computer with internet access in a shared place in the house – not your child’s bedroom
- ask questions when your child shows you what they are doing, such as:
 - how does it work and how do you set it up?
 - who is else is sharing this space or game? (do you know them, or did you ‘meet’ them online?)
 - can you see any risks or dangers in the activity - what would you say to warn/inform a younger child?
 - 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.)

Statistics show that students will not approach an adult for help because

- they might get the blame for any incident
- they don’t think adults “get” their online stuff
- 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.

Protecting personal privacy rights and those of other students:

Students like to publish information about themselves and their friends in spaces like Facebook, SnapChat, Instagram, and blogs, but in doing so they can make themselves more vulnerable to being approached, groomed, bullied or harassed online. To avoid this we recommend they:

- don’t use their own name, but develop an online name and use avatars.
- don’t share personal details including images of themselves or their friends online
- password protect any spaces or accounts they have.
- don’t allow anyone they don’t know to join their chat or collaborative space.
- are reminded that any image or comment they put on the internet is now public (anyone can see, change, or use it) so no full names should appear in reference to individuals in any image, movie, or sound recording
- ALWAYS make the space private so that they can control who sees their space and can communicate with them.

Other considerations:

- Use the internet in line with school's Student Code of Conduct
- Use appropriate language when talking to and working with others online and never write or participate in hate mail.
- Being online can make students feel that they are anonymous and sometimes students may say things online that they would never say to someone's face. Often very few adults visit this online environment. The web space or online chat environment that they use in leisure time might also have explicit language and they may feel they have to be part of it.
- Students need to be reminded that their behaviour online must fall in line with the school's code of conduct.
- Use equipment and resources properly for educational purposes as directed by teacher.
- It is important to realise that there is a time for fun and a time for work even on the internet. Students may often see the Internet as "free" but just looking at a page on the internet incurs a download cost. By just taking care with the equipment, and thinking carefully about printing and downloading from the internet students can save time, money and the environment.
- Using social networking sites for educational purposes and only as directed by teachers
- Web2 tools and social networking spaces allow students to be contributors to the web and allow them to work collaboratively online with other students. Creating or contributing to online spaces like blogs, wikis, digital stories, and podcasts can all be legitimate educational activities which allow students to publish, share and inform others and be active contributors to the web.
- The task, online space and responsibilities should be clearly outlined by the school and reinforced throughout the task.
- The educational purpose should be clearly understood by the student and the online space defined by the school. When publishing, students should be aware that they are posting to the web and should follow safe practices which protect both their privacy and other members of the school community and post/create in an appropriate way for the school project.

Keeping away from rude or offensive sites

In school settings, Internet service providers set up filters to block out a lot of inappropriate content, but these filters are not always foolproof. Students, who deliberately seek out inappropriate content or use technology that bypasses filters, will have their Internet access reviewed and their parents will be immediately informed.

Following copyright procedures

Someone owns all music, information, images and games on the Internet. 'Copyright' is a legal term and there are laws to enforce it. By downloading free content, 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.

Evaluating and using content on the Internet carefully

Not everything on the Internet is true, accurate or unbiased. The school is working to teach information literacy skills, which enable 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.

Not interfering with network security, the data of another user or attempting to log into the network with a username or password of another student is an expectation. Computer resources are for the use of all students so due care should be taken at all times when using these resources.

Students are responsible for everything done using their accounts, and everything in their hard drives and Google accounts. To this end students need to keep their password secret and not gain access to other students' login details.

Seeking teacher assistance

The Internet has some flashy and tricky ways to lead users into some 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.

We also want the whole school community to keep their internet environment as safe as possible so we ask your child if they see a site they think should be blocked to turn off their screen and let a teacher know.

Open communication between parents, teachers and students is the best way to keep students safe.

Use of mobile phone and other mobile technology (Secondary Campus)

Primary students must keep phones in their school bags during school hours.
Secondary students must abide by the following.

Mobile phones and technologies are a seamless part of our lives. The school is asking to have some say in how these technologies are used to ensure that there is the capacity for learning in a classroom. Mernda Hills Christian College has stipulated that mobile phones and other forms of personal players are not to be used during school time. In some situations teachers may request students to use their mobile phones for specific activities. In those circumstances students are permitted to use their devices in the required format, keeping in mind the school rules around responsible digital citizenship.

The recording of both images and sounds can breach other student's rights under the Privacy Act.

Sometimes students feel embarrassed telling their peers that they don't want their image or voice recorded. The use of such images can be instantly shared online.

The Privacy Act says that the posting and sharing of information online or in any other way requires consent. This consent must be fully informed, freely given, current and specific in how the information will be presented and to who it will be presented. Schools are required to obtain signed authority for any work, images or information posted online. All citizens need to respect the rights of others to privacy and students are no exception.

eSafety

The government website <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide> is an excellent resource to provide students, parents and teachers with up-to-date information on all things relating to safety while on the internet. Useful information in easy-to-understand language is there to help you stay safe online.

Issues include:

- Cyberbullying
- Online pornography
- Sending nudes and sexting
- Time online
- Online gaming
- Unwanted contact and grooming

If you have any concerns about this agreement or Internet Safety in general contact either the school or <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide>

Related Policies and Processes

- Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy,
- Child Safe Protection Code of Conduct
- ICT Acceptable Use Agreements
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- OH&S Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Reportable Conduct Scheme Document
- Responsible Behaviour Policy

Relevant Documentation or Legislation

- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Crimes Act 1958 (VIC)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (as amended in 2011)
- The Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014