

**Help for non-English speakers.**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school parent linkages worker / social worker on 03 9097 2000.

**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 Western Autistic 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:

- Western Autistic 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 our school**

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.

Western Autistic 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.

### **Personal Devices at Western Autistic School**

Western Autistic School does not operate a BYOD policy or require that students bring a device to school. Where parents or carers do choose to send a device to school with their child, they should ensure that it:

- Is fully charged each morning
- Is brought to school in a protective 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.

### **Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies**

Digital technologies, if not used appropriately, may present risks to users’ safety or wellbeing. At Western Autistic 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 Western Autistic 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

- 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
- 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
- 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

Western Autistic School may distribute school owned devices to students for use to support their communication when at school. Individual allocation of digital devices will be made upon the advice of the school Speech Therapy team, and parents will be notified that students will have access to these devices at school. Devices allocated for individual use will only be used for the purposes of supporting communication through dedicated software such as Proloquo2Go.

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.

All students engaging in digital learning activities will be actively supervised by school staff.

### **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 the school's statement of values.

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), Western Autistic School will institute a staged response, consistent with our student engagement policy, bullying policy and Child Safety policy as relevant.

## 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
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2023
Consultation	School Newsletter 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2023 Consultative Meeting 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
Approved by	Principal Sam Hindes Adele Field
Next review date	May 2025