



## Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Procedure

### Purpose

This procedure guides student access to and use of digital devices and online services at Willoughby Public 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. Students' safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services is the shared responsibility of students, parents, carers and school staff.

### Scope

This procedure provides a consistent framework for the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services by students in our school. It sets out the shared responsibilities of school staff, students, 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 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 and all online services.

## Key Policy Statements from the Department of Education

### Policy Digital devices and online services for students dated October 2023

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.



## Our School's Approach

Digital devices and online services are an important part of everyday life, shaping the way children and young people learn, communicate, work and play. The school provides a wide range of mobile technology devices which are available for students to use as learning tools in classrooms, in our library and across the school. Learning environments at the school will provide students with the opportunity to use school technology with the aim of supporting students to develop technological, social and emotional competencies. This support will maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of digital environments and prepare students for life beyond school. Digital devices and online services will help students develop the skills needed for digital literacy, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal relationships and collaboration.

Willoughby Public School and its parent/carer community share the responsibilities for teaching children digital literacy and citizenship skills, attitudes and knowledge, including the rights and responsibilities that come with accessing the internet and working within an online environment.

Digital devices and online services may cause harm if used inappropriately, such as bullying or intimidating others or gain access to and share inappropriate content. Willoughby Public School in collaboration with the Department of Education NSW, does what it reasonably can to provide safe and secure access to school resources, equipment and infrastructure, including internet connectivity, for students at our school. Students are given a NSW Department of Education username and password which allows them to access the NSW DoE student portal, a range of online apps and programs and filtered internet.

Willoughby Public School provides a '*Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Agreement*'. This agreement outlines school guidelines for using digital devices and online services, students' responsibility and consequences for misuse. Students will not be permitted to use school devices without having completed and returned this agreement to school towards the beginning of each school year. This agreement is kept by the school and will be referred to as necessary.

## Mobile Phones and Internet Connected Devices

We recognise some students will bring digital devices such as tablets, mobile phones, smartphones and smartwatches to school. Students should only have a mobile phone or internet connected device at school with the consent of their parent. These devices are only to be used outside of school hours and are not to be used on the school site. Devices are to be kept in school bags and the school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage to such devices. Where a watch-type device is worn, they are to be kept in watch-mode (or similar) and all access to phone calls, recording, messaging and internet is to be disabled while on school grounds, at school events and/or during school hours. Where this is not possible, watch-type digital devices are to be kept in school bags.

If an emergency arises at school or there is a need for us to contact you about your child's welfare, this will be done through the Administration office by staff at school. Parents should not contact students by mobile phone or other digital device once a student is on school grounds. If a parent or carer needs to contact a student at school as a result of an emergency or need to pass on a message, they are required to call the school's administration office and a message will be given to the students.

During school camps and excursions, students are not to bring their phones with them for any reason to maintain student safety.

## Consequences for Inappropriate Use

Consequences will be in line with Departmental policies, existing behaviour management policies that align with



our PBEL model and guidelines contained in relevant Legal Bulletins. If the matter is of a serious nature the school may refer it to the police.

Consequences will be delivered if

- students use mobile phones or digital devices while at school, during school hours or while at a school event.
- students access inappropriate content online, share images or use inappropriate language, consequences

If school staff have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has inappropriate material or the phone/internet connected device is being used during school hours, it may be confiscated, for a parent/carer to collect.

## Responsibilities and obligations

*Supporting students to use digital devices and online services in a safe, respectful and responsible way is a shared responsibility.*

### 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.
- Report to staff any known misuse of digital devices and/or online services.
- Communicate respectfully and collaboratively with peers, school staff and the school community and behave in the ways described in the Behaviour Code for Students and our school-wide PBEL expectations.
- Read and sign the 'Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Agreement' at the beginning of each year.

### For 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.
- Read and sign the 'Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Agreement' at the beginning of each year.
- Support implementation of NSW DoE policy, 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.
- Communicate with school staff and the school community respectfully and collaboratively as outlined in the [School Community Charter](#).
- Switch off or put their digital devices on silent when at official school functions, during meetings and when assisting in the classroom.

### For the principal and staff

- Deliver learning experiences that encourage safe, respectful and responsible 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



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including strategies to accommodate students without a digital device.

- Abiding by the NSW DoE policies around technology.
- 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.

### **Communicating this procedure to the school community**

Students will be informed about this procedure through school newsletters and classroom lessons.

Parents and carers will be advised via the school website and via School Bytes. This procedure can be accessed electronically via the school's [website](#) on the school policies page.

### **Review**

The principal or delegated staff will review this procedure annually. This document was developed by school and P & C representatives in 2020 and it's most recent update is February 2025.

### **Appendix**

Appendix 1: Agreement via School Bytes: Student Use of Digital Devices & Online Services Agreement



## Appendix 2: 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 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.