

# Digital Learning Policy

October 2022 – Final Draft





## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Virtual School Victoria on 8480 0000 or [feedback@vsv.vic.edu.au](mailto:feedback@vsv.vic.edu.au).

## 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
- 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 Virtual School Victoria (VSV).

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 the VSV Advisory Board members also need to adhere to codes of conduct relevant to their respective roles. These codes include:

- [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 board)

## 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

### Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies

Digital technologies, if not used appropriately, may present risks to users' safety or wellbeing. At VSV, 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 VSV, 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 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
- have programs in place to educate our students to be safe, responsible and discerning users of digital technologies, including student orientation programs.
- 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 Rights and Responsibilities, which outlines VSV's values and expected student behaviour, including online behaviours
- have an **Acceptable Use Agreement** (Appendix A) 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
- support parents and carers to understand the safe and responsible use of digital technologies and the strategies that can be implemented at home through regular updates in our newsletter, information sheets, website/school portal and information sessions.

Distribution of school owned devices to students and personal student use of digital technologies at school will only be permitted where students and their parents/carers have completed a signed **Acceptable Use Agreement**.

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 teacher or Learning Advisor, (VSV based students) and/or School Supervisor (school-based students), 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 network. Requests to access student messages and files are made to ICT Managers and authorised by a member of Executive Leadership. 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](#).

### Social media use

VSV 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 VSV's Statement of Values, [Student Wellbeing, Inclusion 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), VSV 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 access privileges
- other consequences as outlined in the school's Bullying Prevention Policy, Student Wellbeing, Inclusion and Engagement, Safe and Inclusive Virtual Learning, Student Inclusion, Duty of Care and Bullying Prevention 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
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Accessible to staff via intranet
- Discussed at parent information sessions
- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## Related policies and resources

VSV school policies:

- Statement of Values
- [Student Wellbeing, Inclusion and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#)
- Duty of Care Policy
- Safe and Inclusive Virtual Learning Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- [Visitors Policy](#)
- Camps and Excursions Policy
- OHS Policy

Department policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools](#)
- [Volunteer OHS Management](#)
- [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Workplace Bullying](#)

# Policy review and approval

<b>Created date</b>	<b>October 2022</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	School Council – Date:  School Community – Date:
<b>Endorsed by</b>	<b>Fiona Webster</b> Executive Principal  Signature: .....
<b>Endorsed on</b>	Date:
<b>Next review date</b>	<b>October 2024</b>

# APPENDIX A

## Digital Learning at Virtual School Victoria

Virtual School Victoria (VSV) uses online services to support a high quality and innovative online learning environment. Learning in a Virtual World: Digital Learning at Virtual School Victoria is our plain language policy statement about student participation, privacy compliance and copyright components of digital and online learning at our school. The policy statement can be accessed at [www.vsv.vic.edu.au/ourschool/virtual-school-victoria-policies/](http://www.vsv.vic.edu.au/ourschool/virtual-school-victoria-policies/)

### Online Acceptable Use Agreement

This agreement applies to all students undertaking study at Virtual School Victoria. It is a condition of enrolment that the Student Enrolment Agreement is signed. Please note that Virtual School Victoria may monitor and keep records of your activity on our platforms.

When engaging in school work, either at Virtual School Victoria or at home, I agree to be a safe, responsible and ethical user at all times by:

- respecting others and communicating with them in a supportive manner; never participating in online bullying (e.g. harmful, inappropriate or hurtful online behaviours)
- protecting my privacy; not giving out personal details, including my full name, telephone number, address, email address, passwords and images
- protecting the privacy of others; never posting or forwarding personal details or images without consent
- contacting a teacher or a trusted adult if I personally feel uncomfortable or unsafe online
- contacting a teacher or a trusted adult if I see others participating in unsafe, inappropriate or hurtful online behaviours
- contacting a teacher or a trusted adult if someone writes something I don't like, makes me and/or my friends feel uncomfortable or requests information from me I know is private
- carefully considering the content that I upload or post online; knowing that this is a personal reflection of who I am and what people may think of me
- investigating the terms and conditions of use of the websites I sign up to as part of the learning program (e.g. age restrictions, parental consent requirements) and if my understanding is unclear seeking further explanation from a trusted adult
- confirming that I meet the stated terms and conditions and completing the required registration processes
- respecting copyright and intellectual property laws and requesting permission to use images, text, audio and video and citing references where necessary
- using social networking sites for education purposes as directed by the school
- not downloading unauthorised programs, including games, while using the school's ICT equipment
- not interfering with network systems and security, the data of another user or attempting to log into the network with a user name or password of another student, parent/carer or school staff member
- not revealing my password to anyone including teachers or administrators at the school
- not deliberately entering or remaining in any site that has obscene language or offensive content.

In addition, when I use my personal mobile devices (including my phone), while engaging with my school work, I agree to be a safe, responsible and ethical user at all times by:

- respecting the privacy of others; only taking photos or recording sound or video when others are aware and formal consent has been provided as part of an approved learning program
- respecting others and communicating with them in a supportive manner, including outside school hours and in social contexts by not making harassing phone calls/sending or forwarding on messages
- obtaining appropriate (written) consent from individuals who appear in images or sound and video recordings before forwarding them to other people or posting/uploading them to online spaces.



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