

# STUDENT USE OF DIGITAL DEVICES AND ONLINE SERVICES POLICY



Sydney Catholic Schools

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This policy advises Sydney Catholic School (SCS) communities on managing student use of digital devices and online services.

Digital devices include desktop computers, laptops, tablets, smartwatches, smartphones and other devices.

Online services include in school-related settings, specifically on school grounds, at school-related activities and outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and student conduct.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all SCS staff and students. In this policy, staff means all SCS employees, members of religious orders engaged in schools, volunteers, trainees, interns, and committee members.

This policy applies to school supervised events including (but not limited to) excursions, camps and retreats.

The use of digital devices and online services policy does not apply to:

- activities outside of school hours:
  - out-of-school-hours care (OSHC)
  - travelling between home and school sites
  - travelling to and from school.
- students undertaking workplace learning activities, for example, work experience or a VET course offsite must comply with the policies of the individual workplace or training organisation.

## 3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The safe and secure use of technology-related resources, equipment and infrastructure.
- 3.2 Digital devices and online services are an important part of everyday life, shaping how children and young people learn, communicate, work and play.
- 3.3 Learning environments, at school and at home, should support students in developing technological, social and emotional competencies.
- 3.4 This support should maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of digital technologies and prepare students for life beyond school.
- 3.5 Vigilance must be maintained at all times to ensure that digital devices and online services are not used to cause harm in any way that can include distractions from learning, bullying or intimidating others or gaining access to and sharing inappropriate content.
- 3.6 Students' safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services is the shared responsibility of students, parents, carers and school staff.

## 4. MOBILE PHONES

- 4.1 Student mobile phones (or other communication enabled devices) must be switched off, out-of-sight and be securely stored during the school day.
- 4.2 Student mobile phones should be stored in the student's locker, school bag or using a storage solution determined by the school.
- 4.3 Exemption to the prohibition on mobile phone use during the school day may be applied if the school principal is satisfied that in particular circumstances, the use of mobile phones serves a clear and specific educational or medical purpose.
- 4.4 Exemption must be approved and documented by the school principal and such documentation will include the scope of the exemption, reasons for the exemption, to whom the exemption will apply and the duration of the exemption.
- 4.5 Schools will manage all aspects of non-compliance in accordance with their local behaviour policies and procedures.
- 4.6 Schools are to review the implementation of this policy as part of their regular cycle of review for school policies.

## 5. OTHER DIGITAL DEVICES

- 5.1 Digital devices should not be used other than school endorsed educational purposes during the school day. This includes but is not limited to personal social media, texting, phone calls or instant messaging apps using digital devices.
- 5.2 When not being used for educational purposes these devices must be switched off, out-of-sight and be securely stored.
- 5.3 Except in exceptional circumstances with permission from the teacher, digital devices should not be used at all during non-class time.
- 5.4 Smart and communication enabled watches are not to be used during the school day other than as a watch (they should have flight mode enabled). Students will be asked to remove their watch during exams, assessments or if it is interfering with the student's learning.
- 5.5 No student may use any digital device (including mobile phones) to record audio or video during the school day except with the express written permission of the Principal or Assistant Principal.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 6.1. Principals

- Maintain a positive school culture that includes and promotes safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services.
- Respond to and report any breaches and incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services as required by school rules, this policy and any statutory and regulatory requirements.

- Support parents and carers to understand the strategies that will promote their children's safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services.
- Provide teachers and other school staff with support and professional development in the appropriate use of digital devices and online services and implementation of their school procedure.

## **6.2. All staff**

- Model appropriate use of digital devices and online services in line with SCS policy.
- Report any inappropriate use of digital devices and online services to the Principal, school executive or relevant teaching staff.
- Respond to and report any breaches and incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services as required by school procedures, SCS policy and any statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Support parents and carers to understand the ways in which they can promote their child's safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services.
- Participate in professional development related to this policy.

## **6.3. Parents and carers**

- Educate students in the behaviours that underpin the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services to support the implementation of the school procedure, including its approach to resolving issues.
- Take responsibility for their child's use of digital devices and online services at home and outside of school hours.
- Support the implementation of this policy by not contacting students on digital devices during the school day and contacting the school directly if necessary.
- Communicate with school staff and community respectfully and collaboratively.

## **6.4. Students**

- Use digital devices and online services in safe, responsible and respectful ways, as described in their school procedures and code of conduct, and support their peers to do the same.

## **7. EXCEPTIONS**

Exceptions to the policy may be applied during the school day should certain conditions outlined in the categories below be met:

- school approved and specified activities
- teacher approved learning related activities
- reasonable adjustments to support learning disabilities or learning difficulties are formally documented in a student's individual education plan

- health conditions documented in student health care plans
- off-site activities, limited to excursions, camps and retreats, when approved as part of the Risk Assessment Planning for the activity
- enrolment across multiple home-host schools.

In accordance with this policy, the school's local exceptions can be granted by the school Principal or Assistant Principal and must be documented and communicated to parents/carers and relevant school staff.

Where an exception is granted, the student can only use the mobile phone or digital device for the purpose it was granted.

## 8. FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions about this document or would like further information, please contact the Student Wellbeing and Learning Team on [studentwellbeing-contact@syd.catholic.edu.au](mailto:studentwellbeing-contact@syd.catholic.edu.au), or phone number (02) 9568 8485.

## 9. CLASSIFICATION

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