



Rationale

Access to digital technologies – including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services – are provided to students and staff in DOBCEL schools as digital information and communication are important mediums for contemporary learning and teaching and administration. Levels of protection for child safety in the use of any technology are also required, which means that the technologies used in classrooms will be appropriate to the age and development of students.

[Ministerial Order 1359- Implementing the Child Safe Standards- Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises](#) outlines the requirements for schools to provide safe physical and online environments. Technologies will be used to support learning and the development of networks within and between DOBCEL and other schools for learning and teaching programs and professional learning. They will also enable effective communication with parents and allow them to participate in their children's education, working in partnership with teachers.

DOBCEL schools, along with parents in our community, educate students in the use of information and communication technologies to assist them to become responsible users, creators and publishers in the digital environment. In using and managing internet and network services, students and staff at DOBCEL schools are expected to respect the rights and privacy of all persons. They are called upon to respect the dignity of every human being.

Background

DOBCEL has embedded technology in its workplaces and schools. It is important that this technology is used in a purposeful, responsible, legal and ethical manner that is consistent with the diocesan vision. DOBCEL believes that the use of digital technologies in schools facilitates the development of valuable skills and knowledge and prepares students to thrive in our globalised and inter-connected world. Our vision is to empower students to use digital technologies to reach their personal best and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as young adults.

Scope

This policy was developed by the DOBCEL Board for use in DOBCEL schools. The policy applies to all members of DOBCEL school communities in relation to their use of digital technologies. It is relevant to all computers, electronic devices, internet and network services, information and communication technologies, collaboration tools, email, applications and online services provided, operated or managed by DOBCEL or a DOBCEL school.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

Digital technologies are defined as being any networks, systems, online services, software or hardware including electronic devices and applications that allow a user to access, receive, view, record, store, communicate, copy or send any digital information such as text, images, audio, or video. It includes the use of technology such as email, internet, intranet, phone, mobile device, social media sites, applications, online discussion and chat facilities, collaboration tools, copying and printing.

Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or a young person for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.

School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:

- a) A campus of the school
- b) Online or virtual school environments made available or authorized by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services)
- c) Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for:
 1. Camps
 2. Approved homestay accommodation;
 3. Delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

Source: [Ministerial Order 1359](#)

Policy Statement

All DOBCEL schools will promote educational excellence and enhance the student learning environment through the use of a range of technological and multimedia equipment. Each school will develop its own procedures and protocols aligned with this policy. Schools should consider including information related to the ownership and use of equipment, the support provided by the school, etc.

Students in DOBCEL schools will experience how information can be acquired, processed, stored, retrieved, manipulated, presented and communicated to others. Schools have an important role in preparing students for online communities:

1. This policy will be made available on all school websites and reference to the policy will be made in staff and parent handbooks
2. As a cultural norm, the education of students in the intelligent, safe and responsible use of digital technologies is imperative
3. Curriculum areas and learning can be enhanced by providing access to current and appropriate educational resources using digital technologies and platforms
4. Students will be introduced to ways of safely using digital technologies, which will encourage them to experiment as creators, communicators and publishers
5. Equity of access to digital technologies is provided to all students
6. Students will be educated on the rapidly changing and ever-increasing role that digital technologies play in society and education and how such technologies can be used safely and appropriately
7. All students will be inducted each year on the *Digital Technologies Policy* requirements
8. Students, parents and staff are required to sign the *Digital Technology: Acceptable Use and Cyber Safety Agreement (Appendix 1)*

9. School staff, in conjunction with the principal, will identify digital technologies and cybersafety risk management issues and follow the protocols for managing, recording, monitoring and minimising risks for students
10. The principal will report any serious non-compliance or incidents of cyberbullying to the CEB Education Consultant who will provide advice
11. Schools should also consider guidelines for the use of mobile phones by students whilst at school
12. A risk assessment undertaken by the school will identify possible risks of child abuse and harm in online environments connected with the school
13. Risk management plans list the actions the school will take to prevent or reduce each identified risk of child abuse and harm. The Safeguarding Students and Young People Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy identify how the school can keep children safe in online environments, with specific reference to higher-risk activities such as the potential for online grooming
14. Procurement policies regarding engaging third-party contractors set out processes to protect children from the risk of child abuse and harm from contractors, such as requiring compliance with the school's Safeguarding Students and Young People Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

All students and staff at DOBCEL schools are required to use the internet and network services in accordance with this policy. Any use of devices or services that may be questionable, offensive, controversial or against the Catholic ethos is unacceptable. This includes personal communication with students on matters not related to curriculum or education. These standards apply whenever DOBCEL school equipment or communication lines are used, including use from home or other non-school locations and when a private account is used.

Non-Compliance with This Policy

Disciplinary action may be undertaken by DOBCEL against any student or staff member who is found to be inappropriately using the provided internet service, or any network services, electronic devices or mobile devices. The principal will determine the disciplinary measures to be undertaken in accordance with this policy as well as other policies and guidelines. These measures may be outlined in student/parent/staff handbooks and the Acceptable User and Cyber Safety Agreement for students of the school.

Relevant Legislation

The use and provision of technology must not contravene the following legislation:

- Ministerial Order No. 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises.
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* – VCEA Child Safety Commitment Statement
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Gender Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Crimes Amendment (Bullying) Act 2011*

- *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988*

Key Related Documents

- St Mary's Digital Technology Procedures
- Assessment and Reporting Policy
- Duty of Care – Supervision of Students
- Learning and Teaching Policy
- St Mary's Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- St Mary's Bullying Prevention (including Cyberbullying) Policy

Appendix 1 – Digital Technology: Acceptable Use and Cyber-safety Agreement.