Digital Learning Policy

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 at Rubicon Outdoor 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:

- Rubicon Outdoor 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 technology at our school

Rubicon Outdoor School understands that digital technologies including the internet, apps, computers and tablets provide students with opportunities to support learning and development in a range of ways.

Digital technologies enable our students to interact with and create high quality content, resources and tools that enhance their learning in the outdoors. They also have the potential to support teaching staff to differentiate learning, personalise feedback and collaborate across networks.

Rubicon Outdoor School believes that the intentional use of digital technologies as part of an outdoor learning program and can facilitate the development of valuable skills and knowledge and help students link the learning in the natural world to that in the classroom. This deliberate use also extends to identifying the importance of students spending time together in nature as well as the strong outcomes linked to, at times, the absence of technology in our lives. Our school's vision is to empower people to develop lifelong positive growth through the provision of programs that develop an enhanced understanding of self and others, and the skills required to contribute to a positive community and sustainable environment.

Digital Devices at Rubicon Outdoor School

Classes at Rubicon Outdoor School are delivered in the outdoor environment. Students, as a result are challenged to engage in their learning in this environment with limited use of digital devices such as those that may be used in their home school setting. Students are generally encouraged not to bring their own devices to Rubicon Outdoor School. When required access to tablets, laptops, action cameras or other digital technologies will be provided to support student learning. If it is essential that students bring their own devices to Rubicon, they do so at their own risk due to the varied nature of our learning environments.

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.

In the event that students' need to bring a device for occasional use on a residential program at one of our campuses, Rubicon Outdoor School can provide secure storage for the device for the duration of their time at our school. No such facility can be guaranteed, however, on a journey or base camp program.

Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies

Digital technologies, if not used appropriately, may present risks to users' safety or wellbeing. At Rubicon Outdoor 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 Rubicon Outdoor School, we:

- use online sites and digital tools that support students' learning, and focus our use of digital technologies on being learning-centred
- restrict the use of digital technologies in the school to specific uses with targeted educational or developmental aims
- supervise and support students using digital technologies in the classroom
- effectively and responsively address any issues or incidents that have the potential to impact on the wellbeing of our students
- Remind students of our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* policy that outlines our School's values and expected student behaviour
- use of approved protocols and procedures to protect students working in online spaces, which includes reviewing the safety and appropriateness of online tools and communities, removing offensive content at earliest opportunity
- provide a filtered internet service to block access to inappropriate content
- refer suspected illegal online acts to the relevant law enforcement authority for investigation

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 classroom teacher, 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 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.

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 Rubicon Outdoor School *Statement of Values, Student Wellbeing 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), Rubicon Outdoor School will institute a staged response, consistent with our policies and the Department's *Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines.*

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 network access privileges
- removal of internet access privileges
- return of the student to their home school
- other consequences as outlined in the school's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* 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
- Included in our staff handbook/manual

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	10th July 2022
Consultation	Rubicon Outdoor School Council
Consulted on	17th August 2022
Approved by	Andrew Monson- Principal
Approved on	17th August 2022
Next scheduled review date	July 2024