Digital technology at Outdoor School

Information for parents

Our commitment to the responsible use of digital technology

At Outdoor School we are committed to building a culture of respect and responsibility. We show this in the way we use technology and interact online. We teach our students about responsible digital behaviours, including how to recognise and respond to online dangers and threats. We support students to develop the digital skills they need to make a positive impact in the world. We are intentional and limited about our integration of digital tools into the curriculum.

What we do

	**We set clear expectations** • We have clear expectations about appropriate conduct using digital technologies. • Our **Mobile Phone Policy at https://www.outdoorschool.vic.edu.au/policies/3699/**outlines our school's expectations relating to students using mobile phones during school hours. • We have clear and appropriate consequences when students breach these expectations, in line with our **Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy**. **https://www.outdoorschool.vic.edu.au/policies/3699/**
	**We teach appropriate conduct** • We teach our students to be safe, intentional and responsible users of digital technologies, including age-appropriate instruction on important digital issues such as cybersafety and cyberbullying.
	**We partner with families** • We work with parents and carers to understand the digital technology-related issues they are facing at home. We support them with information and tools that help. Particularly with mobile phone contact.
	**We provide access to technology** • We provide access to very limited educational software for students to use.
	**We supervise digital learning** • We supervise students using digital technologies in the classroom, consistent with our duty of care. • We use clear protocols and procedures to protect students working in online spaces.
	**We take appropriate steps to protect students** • We provide a filtered internet service to block inappropriate content. Full protection from inappropriate content cannot be guaranteed, however, we have processes to report and act on inappropriate content.
	**We appropriately manage and respond to online incidents** • We work to prevent, respond, and learn from issues or incidents relating to the use of digital technology, including cybersecurity incidents, cyberbullying and risks to child safety. • We refer suspected illegal online acts to the police.

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How parents and carers can help

Below are our suggestions for ways you can support your children to responsibly use digital technology.

	**Establish clear routines**
	• Talk to your child about expectations including when, where, and how digital devices can be used at home, ensuring these rules are age-appropriate and consistent. These can include:
	  ○ Requiring devices to be used in a common area, such as a living room or study area
	  ○ Setting up a specific area for charging devices overnight, away from bedrooms, to promote better sleep hygiene.
	  ○ Discuss the reasons for the phone ban at Outdoor School and strategies to manage this.

	**Restrict inappropriate content** • Use built-in parental controls on devices and apps to help manage their device access and restrict inappropriate content. • Consider restricting the use of apps with addictive game mechanics (e.g. rewards, badges, limited exit options).
	**Talk about online safety** • Talk with your child about the importance of protecting personal information, recognising online scams, and understanding and adjusting privacy settings in online spaces. • Talk with your child about age restrictions on social media and explore other ways they can connect with their friends online and offline. • Encourage your child to talk to you or another trusted adult if they feel unsafe online.
	**Model responsible and balanced technology use** • Encourage a healthy balance between screen time and offline activities, especially outdoor unstructured play and time with friends and family, face-to-face.* • Demonstrate responsible and balanced tech use in your own daily routine to set a good example for your child.
	**Work with us** • Let your child's teacher know about concerns you have regarding their technology use • Keep informed about what your child is learning at school, so you can help reinforce positive messages at home.

***Australia's physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines** include the following recommendations for children between 5-17 years-old regarding sedentary recreational screen time:

- no more than 2 hours of sedentary recreational screen time per day
- avoiding screen time 1 hour before sleep
- keeping screens out of the bedroom.

Source: Australia's physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines, https://www.health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians/for-children-and-young-people-5-to-17-years.

Support for parents and carers

To learn more about how to support the safe, intentional and responsible use of digital technologies at home, the eSafety Commissioner provides advice for parents, and outlines available counselling and support services.

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For Students

What we expect

Below are our expectations of students at Outdoor School when using digital technologies.

Be safe



At Outdoor School, we protect personal information and keep safe online.

We do this by:

- Logging out of our devices when they are not in use.
- Restricting the personal information we post online, including images and videos.

Be respectful



At Outdoor School, we are kind and show respect to others when using technology.

We do this by:

- Acting with kindness and never bullying or impersonating others online.
- Thinking about how our words might make others feel before we say or write them.
- Only taking photos or recordings of others when they are aware and have given us permission to do so.
- Seeking permission before sharing others' information online.
- Never using a generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool to upload or generate images of a student, parent, or teacher.

Be responsible



At Outdoor School, we are honest, handle technology with care and follow the school rules.

We do this by:

- Handling devices with care and not interfering with school-managed network or security settings, other people's work, or devices we don't own.
- Following the terms and conditions of any digital tool we use.
- Not downloading or using inappropriate programs like games, or programs/networks designed to bypass the school's internet and content restrictions.
- Not using technology to cheat or steal, and always acknowledging when we use information sourced from others or generate content using AI tools.
- Turning off and securely storing our mobile phone during school hours.
- Not using age-restricted social media when under 16 years-old, except to access appropriate content that is available without an account.
- Ensuring a healthy balance between screen time and offline activities at school.

Ask for help



At Outdoor School, we ask for help if we feel unsure or see something inappropriate.

We do this by talking to a teacher or a trusted adult if:

- We feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- We see others participating in unsafe, inappropriate, or hurtful online behaviour.
- We notice any damage to school technologies.
- We need help understanding about a digital tool or how it can be used.

Support for students:

For useful information to help you stay safe online, the e-Safety Commissioner provides information for young people, and outlines available counselling and support services.