

February 2023

Sutherland North Public School

Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Guidelines

Purpose

These guidelines outline student use of digital devices and online services in school-related settings, including on school grounds, at school-related activities and outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This procedure covers the use of school-provided and personal digital devices and all online services. These guidelines aim to ensure that:

- Digital communication devices do not disrupt the teaching and learning environment for any student or teacher.
- Potential risks to student safety and wellbeing posed by inappropriate use of communication devices are addressed and minimised.
- Students, staff, parents and carers have a clear understanding of school guidelines and personal responsibilities related to the appropriate use of communication devices.

Rational

The staff at Sutherland North Public School recognize that in today's world, many students own and regularly use mobile phones or other digital communication devices. When used appropriately, these devices offer students, their parents, and staff advantages in terms of ease of communication and a sense of personal safety. The school accepts that some parents may require their children to have a mobile phone before or after school for various reasons. However, digital communication devices have the capacity to have a negative impact on the learning environment and when used inappropriately can put the safety and wellbeing of students at risk.

The widespread ownership of digital communication devices requires that the staff, students, parents and carers at Sutherland North Public School take steps to ensure these devices are used in a responsible and safe manner. This procedure provides a consistent framework for the safe, responsible, and respectful use of digital devices and online services by students in our school. It sets out the shared responsibilities of school staff, students and parents and carers. It also provides a framework to manage potential risks to student safety and wellbeing.

The following guidelines must be followed by all members of the school community:

For Students

- Students are required to complete the Sutherland North Public School *Appropriate Use of Digital Communication Devices agreement* co-signed by students, parents, and carers.
- All students are to be made aware of the unacceptable uses of digital communication devices and to ensure they have a clear understanding of what is and is not appropriate.
- Communication devices should be **switched off** as soon as students enter the school grounds. Phones to be kept in the student's bag for the duration of the day, smart watches to the office. Devices are not to be accessed until a student has left the school grounds.
- Students will only be granted permission to access their device by the Principal between 9.00am and 3.00pm under exceptional circumstances.
- Students must not lend a device to another student for use as a phone, for text messaging or for use as a camera or recording device. The student who owns the device will be responsible for its use.

- Students are not permitted to bring their communication devices on school excursions and overnight camps. School staff will not be held responsible for the security of devices if this guideline is breached. In instances where students need to contact their parents, this will be organised by supervising staff.
- Be safe, responsible, and respectful users of digital devices and online services and support their peers to be the same.
- Respect and follow school rules and procedures and the decisions made by staff, knowing that other schools may have different arrangements.
- Communicate respectfully and collaboratively with peers, school staff and the school community and behave in the ways described in the Behaviour Code for Students.

For Parents and Community Members

- It is not appropriate for parents and carers to contact their children on their personal device during school hours, via voice calls or text messaging. The administration office remains the sole point of contact.
- At all official school functions, during meetings or when assisting in classrooms devices should be switched off or placed on silent. Parents and community members are asked to leave the function, meeting or learning space if they need to use their communication device.

Exemptions

The Principal can only approve exemptions to the guidelines outlined in this document. Applications for exemption should only be requested due to exceptional circumstances for an educational purpose where the use forms part of a reasonable adjustment to support student learning and wellbeing.

Unacceptable Use of Communication Devices

- Unless express permission is granted by the Principal, students are not to be in the possession of a communication device between the hours of 8.30am and 3.00pm. Accordingly digital communication devices should not be used to make calls, send text messages, access the internet, take photos or use any other application while students are participating in school activities.
- Using communication devices in an inappropriate manner is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Inappropriate uses of communication devices include but are not limited to:

- Using a communication device at a time that will disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the operation of the school.
- Making calls or sending messages with the intent to upset, bully, harass or threaten another person
- Using devices to take photographs of other people without their consent
- Using obscene, derogatory or socially unacceptable language while using a communication device.
- Using devices to receive, download and display inappropriate photographs or other material.

Related Technology

Related technology such as portable computer games, ipods and other similar devices are not to be brought to school. The school accepts no responsibility for the security of these items and the procedures applying to the inappropriate use of digital communication devices will apply equally to these devices.

Implementation of these Guidelines

- Teachers will discuss these guidelines with students to ensure they have a clear understanding of the content.
- The community will be made aware of the guidelines through the school newsletter, at P&C meetings and on the school's website.
- The guidelines will be made clear to all students and their parents seeking enrolment at Sutherland North Public School.

Responsibilities and Obligations

For parents and carers

- Recognise the role they play in educating their children and modelling the behaviours that underpin the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services.
- Support 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 such as use of online services with age and content restrictions.
- Communicate with school staff and the school community respectfully and collaboratively as outlined in the 2018 School Community Charter.
- Switch off or put their digital devices on silent when at official school functions, during meetings and when assisting in the classroom.

For the Principal and teachers

- Deliver learning experiences that encourage safe, responsible, and respectful use of digital devices and online services. This includes:
 - Establishing agreed classroom expectations for using digital devices and online services, in line with this procedure and departmental policy.
 - Identifying strategies to ensure that all students can engage in classroom activities including strategies to accommodate students without a digital device.
 - Reading and abiding by the Terms of Service for any online services they use in teaching, including those limiting use by age.
 - Educating students about online privacy, intellectual property, copyright, digital literacy and other online safety related issues.
- Model appropriate use of digital devices and online services in line with departmental policy.
- Respond to and report any breaches and incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services as required by school procedures, departmental policy and any statutory and regulatory requirements. This includes:
 - Reporting the creation, possession or distribution of indecent or offensive material to the Incident Support and Report hotline as required by the Incident Notification and Response Policy and Procedures and consider any mandatory reporting requirements.
 - Working with the department and the Office of the eSafety Commissioner (if necessary) to resolve cases of serious online bullying and image-based abuse.
 - Following the school's behaviour management plan when responding to any incident of inappropriate student behaviour relating to the use of digital devices or online services.
- If feasible and particularly as issues emerge, support parents and carers to understand strategies that promote their children's safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services.
- Participate in professional development related to appropriate use of digital devices and online services.

For non-teaching staff, volunteers and contractors

- Be aware of the department's policy, this procedure and act in line with the conduct described.
- Report any inappropriate use of digital devices and online services to the principal, school executive or school staff they are working with.

Complaints

If a student, parent or carer has a complaint under this procedure, they should first follow our school's complaint process. If the issue cannot be resolved, please refer to the department's [guide for students/ parents/ carers about making a complaint about our schools](#).

Review

The principal or delegated staff will review this procedure annually.

Appendix 1: Key terms

Digital citizenship refers to the skills and knowledge a person needs to effectively use digital technologies in a positive way so they can participate in society, communicate with others, and create and consume digital content.

Digital devices are electronic devices that can receive, store, process and share digital information and connect to applications (apps), websites and other online services. They include desktop computers, laptops, tablets, smartwatches, smartphones and other devices.

Digital literacy is the set of social, emotional and technological skills and competencies that people need to understand to use digital devices and online services, and to expand their opportunities for education, employment and social participation, including entertainment.

Educational purpose is any use approved by school staff that supports student learning, wellbeing and educational outcomes.

General capabilities are the broad collection of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions described within the Australian curriculum and NSW syllabus.

Image-based abuse occurs when intimate, nude or sexual images are distributed, or threatened to be distributed, without the consent of those pictured. This includes real, altered and drawn pictures and videos. This is a crime in NSW.

Online bullying involves using technology such as the internet or mobile devices to bully someone. Bullying behaviour has three key features. It involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship. It is ongoing and repeated, and it involves behaviours that can cause harm. Bullying behaviour can also involve intimidation, victimisation and harassment, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

Online safety is the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital media, devices, other technology and online services.

Online services are any software, website or application that can gather, process or communicate information. This includes digital classrooms, chat and messaging, online games, virtual reality, social media and other online spaces.

Reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students.

School-related settings include school grounds, school-related activities and outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This connection may exist in situations where: there is discussion about school taking place outside of school hours; a student is wearing their school uniform but is not on school premises; a relationship between parties commenced at school; students are online in digital classrooms; and where online contact has flow on consequences at school and duty of care requires the school to respond once an incident is reported.

School staff refers to school personnel who have some level of responsibility for implementing policy and the school digital devices and online service procedure. This includes principals, senior staff, teachers, non-teaching staff, school administrative staff, volunteers and contracted staff engaged by schools.