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Digital Learning Policy (Internet, Social Media and Digital Devices)

1.0 PURPOSE

To ensure that all school staff, 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 Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (**DOSCEL**) 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.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and school staff at St Thomas' Sale.

Student and school staff use of technology is also governed by the following DOSCEL policies:

- Acceptable Use of Information and Communications Technology Policy
- Cyber Safety Policy
- Social Media Policy.

School staff, contractors, volunteers and School Advisory Committee members also need to adhere to codes of conduct relevant to their respective roles. These codes include:

- St Thomas' Sale Child Safety Code of Conduct
- [The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct](#) (teaching staff).

3.0 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Policy, “digital technologies” are defined as digital devices, tools, applications and systems that students and school staff use for learning and teaching; this includes DOSCEL approved software and locally sourced devices, tools and systems.

4.0 POLICY

Vision for digital learning at our school

The use of digital technologies is a mandated component of the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies, including the internet, applications (**apps**), computers and tablets, can provide students with rich opportunities to support learning and development in a range of ways.

Through increased access to digital technologies, students can benefit from learning that is interactive, collaborative, personalised, engaging and transformative. Digital technologies enable our students to interact with and create high quality content, resources and tools. It also enables personalised learning tailored to students’ particular needs and interests and transforms assessment, reporting and feedback, driving new forms of collaboration and communication.

St Thomas’ Sale believes that the use of digital technologies at school allows the development of valuable skills and knowledge and prepares students to thrive in our globalised and inter-connected world. Our school’s vision is to empower students to use digital technologies safely and appropriately to reach their personal best and fully equip them to contribute positively to society as happy, healthy young adults.

Safe and appropriate use of digital technologies

Digital technologies, if not used appropriately, may present risks to users’ safety or wellbeing. At St Thomas’ Sale, 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 St Thomas’ Sale, we:

- use online sites, digital tools and video conferencing platforms that support students’ learning, and focus our use of digital technologies on being learning-centred
- use digital technologies in the classroom for specific purpose with targeted educational or developmental aims
- supervise and support students using digital technologies for their schoolwork, including where programs are delivered virtually via video conferencing platforms, off-site, by another school or instructor while our students remain on-site
- effectively and responsively address any issues or incidents that have the potential to impact on the wellbeing of our students

- have programs in place to educate our students to be safe, responsible and discerning users of digital technologies, including [insert details of specific programs]
- educate our students about digital issues such as privacy, intellectual property and copyright, and the importance of maintaining their own privacy and security online
- actively educate and remind students of our school's values and expected student behaviour, including online behaviours
- have an Acceptable Use Agreement outlining the expectations of students when using digital technologies for their schoolwork
- use clear protocols and procedures to protect students working in online spaces, which includes reviewing the safety and appropriateness of online tools and communities and removing offensive content at the earliest opportunity
- educate our students on appropriate responses to any dangers or threats to wellbeing that they may encounter when using the internet and other digital technologies
- provide a filtered internet service at school to block access to inappropriate content
- refer suspected illegal online acts to the relevant law enforcement authority for investigation
- support parents, guardians and carers to understand the safe and responsible use of digital technologies and the strategies that can be implemented at home through regular updates in our newsletter, information sheets, website/school portal and information sessions.

Distribution of school owned devices to students and personal student use of digital technologies at school will only be permitted where students and their parents, guardians or carers have completed and signed an Acceptable Use Agreement.

It is the responsibility of all students to protect their own password and not divulge it to another person. If a student or school staff member knows or suspects an account has been used by another person, the account holder must notify [insert relevant role/s, i.e., classroom teacher, the administration], immediately.

All messages created, sent or retrieved on the school's network are the property of DOSCEL. DOSCEL 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.

Further information on supervision arrangements for students engaging in digital learning activities is available in the DOSCEL Acceptable Use of Information and Communications Technology Policy.

Social media use

Our school follows the DOSCEL Social Media Policy to ensure social media is used safely and appropriately in student learning and to ensure appropriate parent, guardian and carer notification occurs or, where required, consent is sought. Where the student activity is visible to the public, it requires consent.

In accordance with the DOSCEL Social Media Policy, school staff will not 'friend' or 'follow' a student, including a recent former student (i.e. enrolled at a DOSCEL school within a two-year period before connecting) or parents, guardians and carers of current students on a personal social media account or accept a 'friend' request from a student, parent, guardian or carer of current students using a personal social media account unless it is objectively appropriate, for example where a parent is a personal friend or a student is also a family member of the staff member and the staff member has advised the Principal of the connection and the circumstances.

If a staff member of our school becomes aware that a student or a parent, guardian or carer of a current student at the school is 'following' them on a personal social media account, the staff member is required to ask the student, parent, guardian or carer to 'unfollow' them, and to notify the school if the student or parent, guardian or carer does not do so.

Student behavioural expectations

When using digital technologies, students are expected to behave in a way that is consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct, DOSCEL's Acceptable Use of Information and Communications Technology Policy, Cyber Safety Policy and Anti-Bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy (Students).

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), St Thomas' Sale will institute a staged response, consistent with the student engagement and behaviour policies.

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 email privileges
- removal of internet access privileges
- removal of printing privileges
- other consequences as outlined in the DOSCEL's, Cyber Safety Policy and Anti-Bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy (Students), Enrolment Policy and Enrolment Handbook.

5.0 COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website and Parent Access Module(PAM)
- Included in school staff, contractor and volunteer induction processes
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter

- Discussed at student forums/through communication tools
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

6.0 RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, documents and codes. These include:

- Acceptable User Agreement
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct

Related DOSCEL policies

- Acceptable Use of Information and Communications Technology Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Prevention Policy (students)
- Cyber Safety Policy
- Social Media Policy

Other related documents and resources

- [eSafety Commissioner – Report Online Harm](#)
- [The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct](#)
- Ministerial Order No. 1359, Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Facilities

7.0 AUTHORITY, MONITORING AND REPORTING

DOSCEL, a Company incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth.), is the Governing Authority of primary and secondary schools in the Diocese of Sale, excluding Catholic College Sale and Lavalla Catholic College, Traralgon.

The Chief Executive Officer, DOSCEL, is responsible for the management and general administration of DOSCEL schools. Based on the principle of subsidiarity and in keeping with the DOSCEL Delegation Register for Schools, a broad range of duties, functions, powers and authority are delegated to the Principal. This includes the effective implementation of this policy and the compliance obligations outlined in this policy.

However, the Chief Executive Officer, DOSCEL, remains responsible for monitoring the development and implementation of this policy and for providing reports as required to the Directors of the DOSCEL Board.

The Principal is responsible for:

- ensuring compliance with the obligations outlined in this policy;
- assigning authority, responsibility and accountability at appropriate levels within the school for policy implementation and compliance;
- providing delegated staff with the direction, support and resources necessary to fulfil policy requirements;

- ensuring cyclic reviews of the policy;
- reporting and escalating concerns, issues and policy breaches to the Chief Executive Officer, DOSCEL, and working collaboratively with the Chief Executive Officer, DOSCEL, to resolve them.

Whilst the Principal will play an important role in effective implementation of this policy and compliance with the Standards, it is noted that responsibility for compliance with the Standards ultimately remains with DOSCEL.

8.0 POLICY STATUS AND REVIEW

Approval

This Policy is endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer, DOSCEL.

Implementation Date:	May 2023
Review Date:	May 2024