



Purpose

'The digital world is characteristic of the contemporary world...the web and social networks have created a new way to communicate and bond...Yet to understand this phenomenon as a whole, we need to realise that, like every human reality, it has its share of limitations and deficiencies.'

Pope Francis, Christus vivit, 2019.

Access to digital technologies, including the internet, is provided to students and staff at St Mary's College for the deaf (St Mary's College) because digital information and communication are important mediums for contemporary learning and teaching and administration. Within MACS a range of technology platforms, such as the Integrated Catholic Online Network (ICON) provide access to a suite of digital technologies. The information, communication and learning technologies used by students in classrooms will be appropriate to the age and development of students. These technologies are used to support professional learning and the development of networks within and between St Mary's College and other schools for professional learning. They also enable effective communication with our parents and allow them to participate in their children's education, working in partnership with teachers.

In using and managing internet and network services, students and staff at St Mary's College are expected to respect the rights and privacy of all persons. They are called upon to respect the dignity of every human person. St Mary's College, 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.

Digital technologies and their use in classrooms are opening up new opportunities for learning, and previously unimagined approaches to teaching and learning. Today, young people have access to knowledge, people and new ideas like never before. They are able to connect, collaborate and build relationships with peers, educators and the wider global community. The use of digital technologies within Catholic schools supports learners to question, evaluate and consider the validity of information and then search for truths contained in those ideas. Learners are empowered to demonstrate adaptability and versatility in thinking and strategies as they select, use and manage a range of applications and technologies. We seek to develop students who are responsible and ethical communicators, creators and publishers in the digital community.

This policy outlines the appropriate use and management of digital technologies such as the internet and network services at St Mary's College and the host school in accordance with legal and moral requirements and expectations.

Scope

This policy applies to members of the St Mary's College community in their use of digital technologies. It applies to all computers, devices, internet and network services, information and communication technologies, applications, and systems provided, operated and managed by the school. This policy does not apply to the curriculum content or the expected standards of usage by students or staff in the school. The curriculum and teaching practices and pedagogy are outlined in documents related to our learning and teaching programs.

Definitions

Computer is either a desktop or portable laptop device that performs processes, calculations and operations based on instructions provided by a software or hardware program.

Device refers to a unit of physical hardware or equipment that provides one or more computing functions within a computer system. It can provide input to the computer, accept output or both. Typical hardware includes a computer mouse, speakers, printer and microphone.

Email means the system that enables users to send data over the internet using computers and mobile devices.

ICON means the Integrated Catholic Online Network which is used to deliver shared services for educational and administrative purposes across Catholic schools.

Internet means the system of interconnected networks that connects computers for data transmission and storage.

Intranet refers to a local system of computers enabling students and staff to communication and share information within their school community.

Host School means the partner school where a St Mary's Campus conducts educational programs separately and in collaboration with that partner school.

Mobile devices refers to (but is not limited to) mobile phones, PDAs and portable storage devices.

Network services means the facilities and resources located on and delivered via a computer-based network, including communication systems, internet and intranet services, mobile devices, electronic mail, web services, printer services, database services, back-up services, file services and network management services.

Parents includes parents, guardians and carers.

Social networking means web-based services that allow individuals to create their own online profiles and communicate with each other by voice, chat, instant message, image sharing, video conference and blogs in a virtual community.

Staff means salaried, voluntary and contracted persons.

Students means those students enrolled at St Mary's College.

Website is an internet based page or series of pages grouped together and managed by a person or group.

Principles

The use of digital technologies within our school by staff and students at St Mary's College is underpinned by the following principles and understanding:

- that digital technologies provide valuable opportunities for staff and students to collaborate, connect and create with peers, colleagues, experts and the wider community
- that online behaviour will at all times demonstrate respect for the dignity of each person in the community
- users will behave in a manner that is ethical when using the internet and network services (even for personal communication)
- the Catholic beliefs and ethos of the school, and professional expectations and standards required by teachers are demonstrated in the way the technologies are used

- inappropriate online behaviour, including cyberbullying, will not be tolerated.

Policy

Internet and Network Access

Access to internet and network services are provided by MACS to staff and students of St Mary's College for educational and administrative purposes. From time to time, other MACS policies and requirements in particular schools may result in restrictions.

Access rights assigned to students and staff at St Mary's College will be determined by the principal and may vary as educational and administrative purposes change.

Students and staff at St Mary's College may not use the internet and network services provided for commercial purposes, either offering or acquiring goods or services for personal use. The services cannot be used for political lobbying or proliferation of unnecessary communications.

Expectations of users

All students and staff at St Mary's College 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, and 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 St Mary's College equipment or communication lines are used, including use from home or other non-school location and when a private account is used.

To this end, all St Mary's College students must read, understand and sign an Acceptable Use Agreement. This will be provided by the partner school as St Mary's College students use the network of the partner school.

Non-compliance with this policy

Disciplinary action may be undertaken by St Mary's College against any student or staff member who is found to be inappropriately using the provided internet, network services, device or mobile device. The principal will determine the disciplinary measures to be undertaken in accordance with other policies and guidelines. These measures may be outlined in staff handbooks or the Acceptable User Agreement for students used by St Mary's College.

Duty of Care

St Mary's College will provide instruction to students in online personal safety issues, including inappropriate sites, stranger danger, cyberbullying and scams. St Mary's College will prepare staff to deal with these issues and encourage staff and parents to avail themselves of workshops and online resources as provided by host schools.

Monitoring

Students

Online activities may be monitored or reviewed to assess network efficiency, examine system security and to investigate alleged breaches of this policy.

Staff

An authorised person (e.g. principal, Regional General Manager or other MACS staff member) can monitor the use of MACS ICT resources. Server logs may also be used in an investigation of an alleged breach of this policy.

Security

To minimise risk to MACS information and communication networks from viruses and intrusions, current virus screening software is activated, and where appropriate, passwords are used by staff and students of St Mary's College. Firewalls will be maintained. The management of system protocols and configurations are the responsibility of the staff authorised by the school or MACS. Non-authorised staff and students are not permitted to have access to these levels of system management.

Email

Email service is provided for educational and administrative purposes. Staff and students at St Mary's College must identify themselves appropriately by using a signature block at the bottom of the email message that includes their name, school phone number and postal address. St Mary's College advises students and staff that they may be held accountable for the email they create and distribute using the network.

Websites

St Mary's College may create, or have created, a website with the approval of the principal. These websites must be established and maintained in accordance with MACS policies and guidelines and relevant legislation.

Social networking

Provision of social networking for students must be related to an educational purpose. This is at the discretion of the principal.

Acceptable Use Agreements – to be developed by each school

A student declaration outlining the conduct expected of students when using digital technologies is distributed to St Mary's College students along with students of the partner school to provide consistency and clarity in the combined community. This is aligned with the school's student behaviour management policies.

The Acknowledgement section for students and parents allows them to declare their understanding of the Student Device Program Agreement by providing their signatures. Parents/guardians are expected to accept the Student Device Program Agreement as provided by St Mary's College or the partner school on Operoo, another Learning Management Platform, or complete a paper copy on or before the day that the device is collected from the College.

Students

St Mary's College through its partner schools provides students and parents/guardians/carers with the following:

- a copy of St Mary's College Acceptable Use Agreement

- a copy of this policy.

The Acceptable Use Agreement is provided in full for consideration by all signatories. The Agreement is to be signed by the student, parent/guardian/carer and school representative before the student is given access to, and use of, a school's internet, network services and devices.

Staff

Staff are required to use the internet and network services in accordance with this and other policies St Mary's College provides staff with the following:

- a copy of this policy
- a copy of the Acceptable User Agreement.

Related school policies

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Student Codes of Conduct
- Cyber Security Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Student Behaviour Policy

Responsible director	Director, Education Excellence
Policy owner	Chief Education, Strategy and Performance
Approving body/individual	MACS Executive Director
Assigned board committee	Education Policy and Strategy
Risk rating	High
Approval date	14 September 2022
Date of next review	April 2023

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned framework	Care, Safety and Welfare of Students
Related documents	Code of Conduct for MACS Staff ICT Acceptable Use Agreement – Students
Superseded documents	ICT Acceptable Use Policy – v1.0 - 2021
School document owner	Principal
School review	Completed November 2025 (minor editing amendments)