



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION USE BY STUDENTS POLICY

Rationale

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is utilised in schools for learning, teaching and administration. The availability of such resources provides the opportunity for schools to help students develop their full potential. ICT provides significant educational value but can pose risks regarding safety, personal reputation and corporate reputation.

In accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, communication must reflect the highest standard of accountability and sensitivity to the dignity of the human person. 'Students need also to critique the influence of social, political and economic structures in Australian society from a Gospel perspective. Media and other instruments of communication are particularly important.' (Mandate, para 22)

Definitions

'Information and Communication Technology (ICT)' includes all hardware, software, systems and technology including the internet, email, telecommunications devices and social media (e.g. Facebook) owned by the school, students and families.

Defamation is the publication, declaration or broadcast of material that is capable of lowering the reputation of a person in the estimation of others.

Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying means unlawful behaviour as defined in the Catholic Education Commission policy statement 2-C4 Harassment, Unlawful Discrimination, Victimisation, and Bullying.

Social media refers to a group of internet based applications that allow users to share information and create communities.

Principles

The policy concerning student use of ICT shall reflect the teachings and educational goals of the Catholic school. Usage of ICT shall be balanced with all elements of the school curriculum.

Schools shall ensure policies and practices are effective in ensuring appropriate usage by students of ICT.

All written, graphic, audio and other materials created, produced, communicated, stored or accessed on school ICT and privately owned ICT being used on the school site, including emails, are the property of the school, and as such, are subject to monitoring by the school.

ICT is provided to students as a tool to support learning and as such should be used in accordance with the expectations of the school as set out in this policy.

The school's policy on the use of ICT by students shall reflect the developmental stages of students.

The use of school, student and family owned ICT on the school site, including the internet, email, and social media by students shall not be contrary to relevant State and Commonwealth laws (a summary of these laws is an attachment to this policy and forms part of this policy), a breach of school rules or policy, or otherwise be inappropriate or offensive (as outlined at procedure 5 of this policy).

As parents/caregivers are the prime educators of their child, they shall be informed of the school policy and encouraged to assist in facilitating its implementation.

Procedures

The school's policy shall identify acceptable, unacceptable and unlawful use of ICT by students.

Acceptable use shall include, but is not limited to:

- gathering, organising, creating and sharing appropriate information for educational or related purposes
- encouraging collaborative projects and resource sharing
- any other tasks that are for educational or related purposes or that support and promote the school and its ideals.

Unacceptable use shall include but is not limited to:

- accessing networks without proper authorisation
- transmitting or deliberately accessing, creating and/or receiving material that is inappropriate or offensive. Inappropriate or offensive material includes but is not limited to threatening, sexually explicit, offensive, defamatory or discriminatory materials, or material that may be harmful physically or emotionally, including bullying or harassment within or outside the school.
- unauthorized disclosing or communicating of information concerning any password, identifying code or other confidential information without permission.
- interfering with or disrupting network users, services or equipment. Disruptions include but are not limited to unsolicited advertising, intentional propagation of viruses in any form and using the network to make unauthorized entry to any other machine accessible via the school network (i.e. 'hacking')
- breaching copyright laws, including software copyright and reverse engineering of software or other laws governing intellectual property.
- using school network and/or equipment to conduct private business for commercial gain or promote material unrelated to school defined tasks.
- bringing the school or Catholic Education into disrepute. 5.2.3 Unlawful use shall include but is not limited to:
 - defaming a person or organisation in an email, web page or through social media.
 - infringing of copyright laws i.e. reproduction or adaptation of copyrighted material by downloading and further disseminating the material.
 - digital communication that could constitute sexual discrimination or sexual harassment.
 - digital communication that could constitute cyber bullying

- storing, accessing, displaying or creating sexually offensive material
- sending digital communications which are discriminatory on the basis of, for example, race, sex, gender, disability or age.
- undertaking activities that breach State or Commonwealth legislation.

All students and their parents/guardians shall be made aware of the school's policy on student use of ICT. The school's policy shall be available to the school community through appropriate means e.g. the school internet site, or in a hard copy format when requested.

Emphasis shall be placed on educating students, at a developmentally appropriate level, about ICT, its applications, protocols, safety and digital citizenship. This educative process shall be integrated within all areas of the school curriculum and be available to the school community through various means, for example, information sessions, school website.

The school's policy shall contain statements that appropriately identify and explain inappropriate or offensive material or conduct, such as material or conduct that:

- infringes a person's copyright or other intellectual property rights
- is defamatory of a person or an organisation
- contains sexually explicit, indecent or obscene or pornographic material
- is discriminatory against a person on the basis of, for example, sex, race, religion, disability or age
- deals with a person's personal information in a way that breaches privacy laws
- constitutes racial harassment or incites racial hatred
- constitutes harassment or bullying
- is infected with a computer virus, would result in a breach of school security or disruption to the school's networks, or constitutes a 'cybercrime'
- is otherwise contrary to school rules or policy

The school's policy shall state that unacceptable use of ICT constitutes a serious breach of school rules and possibly the law and may result in a student losing the right to use ICT resources for a period of time and/or the application of other sanctions.

Unlawful and/or serious misuse of ICT may result in the school involving the Police or other government agencies.

The use of the school, student or family owned ICT at the school site shall be informed by the support documentation published on the CEOWA website.