Digital Learning Policy

(Ratified by School Council: March 2018)

PURPOSE:

In today's modern society, access to information and communication technology (ICT) enables schools and their students unprecedented access to electronic and digital information. Digital technology and the internet provide teachers and students with opportunities to connect, create and collaborate with individuals, organisations and groups world-wide. This allows students to increase their educational skills, knowledge and abilities through what is referred to as 'digital learning'.

The use of ICT and other digital resources carries with it responsibilities. Users must, at all times, remember that when engaged in 'digital learning' they are using the ICT provided to them for educational purposes alone. The specific guidelines for acceptable use are detailed in the School's *"Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Appropriate Use Policy"*.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for teachers, students, families and members of our wider learning community, as to how digital technologies used for clear learning purposes, coupled with effective pedagogy, can enhance student learning outcomes.

Under the new Victorian Curriculum, ICT is referred to as Digital Technologies.

GUIDELINES:

Curriculum Delivery and Assessment

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority website provides the framework for curriculum development for the ICT domain. This framework provides schools with assessment advice and progression points against which student achievement can be measured.

The VCAA provides the following overview for curriculum delivery:

> *ICT, as an interdisciplinary domain, focuses on providing students with the tools to transform their learning and to enrich their learning environment. The knowledge, skills and behaviours identified for this domain enable students to:*

> - *develop new thinking and learning skills that produce creative and innovative insights*
> - *develop more productive ways of working and solving problems individually and collaboratively*

- *create information products that demonstrate their understanding of concepts, issues, relationships and processes*
- *express themselves in contemporary and socially relevant ways*
- *communicate locally and globally to solve problems and to share knowledge*
- *understand the implications of the use of ICT and their social and ethical responsibilities as users of ICT.*

Strands in the Digital Technologies domain of the Victorian Curriculum are organised into three dimensions being:

Strands	Digital Systems	Data and Information	Creating Digital Solutions
	Focuses on the hardware, software and network components of digital systems. Students initially learn about a range of hardware and software, and progress to an understanding of how data are transmitted between components within a system, and how the hardware and software interact to form networks.	Focuses on the properties of data, how they are collected and represented, and how they are interpreted in context to produce information. Students learn how data are represented and structured symbolically for use by digital systems, as well as techniques for collecting, managing and organising data that is used to solve problems and create and communicate ideas and information.	Explores the interrelated processes and associated skills by which students create digital solutions. Students engage in the four processes of analysing, designing, developing and evaluating. Creating Digital Solutions requires skills in using digital systems and computational, design and systems thinking, and interacting safely by using appropriate technical and social protocols.

For further information refer to:
http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/technologies/digital-technologies/curriculum/f-10

Online Teaching and Learning Resources

A range of online systems, tools and resources are available from the Department of Education (DET) to support digital learning in schools:

Access to Professional Learning

- ICT Professional Learning resources provide support to build educators' skills and confidence in using digital learning through structured professional learning, collaborative networks such as personal learning networks (PLN) and through inquiry driven communities of practice, see: Professional Learning

<u>Safe and Responsible Use of Digital Learning</u>

- Safe and Responsible Use resources support school communities to understand the behaviours and processes that will help them to act in a safe and responsible manner when using digital technologies, see: <u>Safe and Responsible Use</u> and refer to the School's *"Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Appropriate Use Policy"*

<u>FUSE- A digital resource bank for teachers and students</u>

- FUSE provides access to online educational resources from around the world. Primary and secondary students and teachers can search for websites, interactives, images, audio and video as well as other online resources. Government school teachers can log into 'My Desk' to manage and upload resources, create resource packages to share and access licenced content. All resources are recommended and reviewed by educators, and tagged according to audience, AusVELS and post-compulsory curriculum frameworks, see: <u>FUSE</u>

<u>Digital Deck- an online glossary of digital learning tools</u>

- The Digital Deck is like a pack of cards and provides a quick overview of the range of digital resources available to schools. It starts with an eduSTAR overview then explores other resources and methods along a continuum. Each card has a description, advice for getting started and classroom ideas. The cards are available in hard copy or can be accessed online. For more information, see: <u>Digital Deck</u>

<u>EduSTAR- a software image for Victorian Government schools</u>

- The eduSTAR software image provides educational software that adds value to teaching and learning. Teachers and students can search the online eduSTAR Catalogue for software by learning area, once authenticated they can download core software and install it on multiple devices.

Research and Verification of Digital Sources

Students are expressly taught to question and verify the credibility of online digital resources which they access for the purpose of research. As part of the English curriculum, they are taught to identify the difference between facts and opinions and the associated vocabulary and language features.

Students are educated to understand and differentiate between domain name extensions and their associated conventions (for example: .com .org .au .gov .edu).

Responsible Digital Citizenship and Social Media

Through classroom discussions and explicit teaching, students are educated to understand and investigate their own and others' '*digital footprints*'. A digital footprint is the information that a person leaves behind each time they access or post content to the internet. Digital footprints also exist within intranets and local use environments (eg: a history of search items on a PC or tablet). Students discuss and promote safe online practices which minimise or manage their own and others' digital footprints.

The use of 'social media' sites is strictly monitored by teachers and any access to these sites by students, as part of teaching and learning, is to be done in conjunction with the parents' express permission. A clear learning intention must be stated and provided in order for access to these sites to be considered appropriate.

Use of Blogs and Wikis

A '*blog'* is a regularly updated website or web page, typically run by an individual or small group that is written in an informal or conversational style. The terminology blog is an abbreviation of 'weblog'. Entries made as part of a blog are commonly referred to as 'posts'.

Global2 is the Department's blogging community and is accessible to Victorian government and Catholic schools. Global2 provides space for online collaboration, opportunities for teachers and students to post and comment on blogs, collaborate on wikis, set up discussion forums and embed videos and images. Personal levels of access can be customized for the space, see: Global2

A '*wiki*' is a website or database developed collaboratively by a community of users, allowing any user to add and edit content. A popular example of this is 'Wikipedia'. As part of their digital learning, students discuss how to cross-reference and verify information which appears in a Wiki.

Virtual Conferencing

Virtual conferencing opens doors to learning outside of the traditional four walls of a classroom. It enables teachers and students to collaborate online with other classrooms, connect with experts or access professional learning. It can be accessed via the internet or by using a dedicated video conferencing system. It allows for participants in multiple locations to interact using a wide range of media. For more information about the many virtual conferencing tools that Victorian schools have access to, see: Virtual Conferencing

Online Learning Platforms

In order to promote 'anywhere, anytime' learning access for our students, the School utilises Edmodo (see: [About Edmodo](#)) at Level 5-6, in order to provide senior students with supervised access to a social media platform. The use of this platform is governed by the School's Digital User Agreement.

The benefits of an online learning platform are:
- Collaboration between students and teachers outside of the walls of a traditional classroom
- Real-time access for parents to view their child's Home Learning assignments and interactions with their peers online
- The opportunity to reinforce and review concepts taught at school
- A tool to communicate and seek feedback from peers and teachers to confirm understandings.

In order to provide students with the opportunity to collaborate online, and to develop a digital portfolio, the School utilises Seesaw (see: [About Seesaw](#)). The use of this platform is governed by the School's Digital User Agreement.

Blended Learning and Flipped Classrooms

'Blended learning' (also known as hybrid learning) is an instructional approach in which a student learns, at least in part, at a supervised physical location away from the school through online delivery. Through blended learning, the student has control over at least some aspects of the time and place of accessing the curriculum. The premise behind this instructional approach is that it supports maximizing access to student learning by using both technology and real life educators in the process. It acknowledges that effective digital learning cannot take place completely online and requires the face-to-face interaction between teacher and student.

The 'flipped classroom' (also known as flipped learning) is a pedagogical model in which the typical lecture and homework elements of a classroom are reversed. Short video lectures are viewed by students at home before the class session, while in-class time is devoted to exercises, projects, or discussions. This is an effective digital learning tool for use to provide students with additional time to access specific teacher knowledge based upon the student's personal area of inquiry.

Robotics and Coding

The school provides students with the opportunity to develop their coding skills through a sequenced approach to the teaching of coding skills. Resources utilised are: Beebots, Dash and Dot Robots, EV3 Robots and various other resources.

Digital Learning as a Communication Tool

Communication for Students

Upon enrolment to the school all Year 3-6 students are provided with an '@usps.vic.edu.au' email address which is monitored and filtered by the school. Students are provided this email address for educational purposes and may use it to contact their peers, teachers and members of the wider learning community. Guidelines for the use of this email address are outlined in the School's *"Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Appropriate Use Policy".*

<u>Communication for Parents and Families</u>

The School uses the digital platform 'Flexibuzz' (see; [Flexibuzz](#)) to communicate digitally with parents and push out notifications to any registered digital device. As part of the School's subscription, there is a whole-school inbox and each year level has its own specific inbox. These boxes are available to members of the school community. Usage of these boxes and content posted, is covered by the School's Communication Policy.

RELATED LEGISLATION:

Victorian Curriculum http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/

Digital Learning Support and Resources
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/curriculum/Pages/elearning.aspx

RELATED POLICIES:

- iPad Acceptable Use Agreement

- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Appropriate Use Policy

POLICY EVALUATION:

Evaluation will be conducted annually by the Digital Learning Professional Team.

DUE DATE FOR REVIEW:

Due for review in February 2019.