



Distance Education Centre Victoria
Flexible learning for all

Online Acceptable Use Policy

The Distance Education Centre of Victoria uses the online environment, which includes but is not limited to the Internet, as a teaching and learning tool. We see the online environment and other digital media as valuable resources, but acknowledge they must be used responsibly.

All DECV students are required to use the online environment responsibly for school purposes. Students, parents and supervisors should be aware that the nature of the online environment means that full protection from inappropriate content can never be guaranteed.

At the Distance Education Centre of Victoria we:

- provide a filtered service (Janison - our Learning Management System)
- provide teaching and learning direction in Internet activities
- reinforce the importance of safe and respectful use of the Internet in all curriculum areas
- provide support to parents to understand this agreement (e.g. language support)
- may allow student access to social networking sites for educational purposes - this will be under teacher direction with clear protocols established

Bridging the gap between home and school

For DECV students, when completing school work, the Online environment is used to support teaching and learning. Outside these times, however, it might be used differently. Not only is it a study resource for students, but it is increasingly being used as a social space to meet and chat.

If you have the Internet at home, encourage the student to show you what they are doing online.

We recommend you:

- find out how he/she uses the Internet and who else is involved in any online activities
- have the computer with Internet access in a shared place in the house - not the student's bedroom
- ask questions when the student shows you what they are doing, such as:
 - how does it work and how do you set it up?
 - who is else is sharing this space or game? (do you know them or did you "meet" them online?)
- can you see any risks or dangers in the activity - what would you say to warn/inform a younger child?
- what are you doing to protect yourself or your friends from these potential dangers?

- when would you inform an adult about an incident that has happened online that concerns you? Discuss why the student might keep it to themselves.

Statistics show that students will not approach an adult for help because:

- they might get the blame for any incident
- they don't think adults "get" their online stuff
- they might put at risk their own access to technology by either:
 - admitting to a mistake or
 - highlighting a situation that might lead a parent to ban their access.

Student and parent/supervisor declaration: What are you agreeing to and why?

Protecting personal privacy rights and those of other students

Students like to publish information about themselves and their friends in spaces like Facebook, blogs etc. but in doing so they can make themselves more vulnerable to being approached, groomed or bullied online. To avoid this we recommend they:

- don't use their own name, but develop an online name and use avatars.
- don't share personal details including images of themselves or their friends online
- password protect any spaces or accounts they have.
- don't allow anyone they don't know to join their chat or collaborative space.
- are reminded that any image or comment they put on the Internet is now public (anyone can see, change or use it) so no full names should appear in reference to individuals in any image, movie or sound recording
- using the Internet in line with school's student code of conduct
- using appropriate language when talking to and working with others online and never write or participate in hate mail.

Being online can make students feel that they are anonymous and sometimes students may say things online that they would never say to someone's face. Often very few adults visit this online environment. The web space or online chat environment that they use in leisure time might also have explicit language and they may feel they have to be part of it.

Using equipment and resources properly for educational purposes as directed by teachers

It is important to realise that there is a time for fun and a time for work even on the Internet. Students may often see the Internet as "free" but just looking at a page on the Internet incurs a download cost. By just taking care with the equipment, and thinking carefully about printing and downloading from the Internet students can save time, money and the environment.

Using social networking sites for educational purposes and only as directed by teachers

Web2 tools and social networking spaces allow students to be contributors to the web and allow them to work collaboratively online with other students. Creating or contributing to blogs, wikis,

digital stories and podcasts can all be legitimate educational activities which allow students to publish, share and inform others and be active contributors to the web.

The task, online space and responsibilities should be clearly outlined by the school and reinforced throughout the task.

The educational purpose should be clearly understood by the student and the online space defined by the school. When publishing students should be aware that they are posting to the web and should follow safe practices which protect both their privacy and other members of the school community and post/create in an appropriate way for the school project.

Keeping away from rude or offensive sites

In school settings, Internet Service Providers set up filters to block out a lot of inappropriate content, but these filters are not always fool proof. Students who deliberately seek out inappropriate content or use technology that bypasses filters, should have their Internet access reviewed.

Following copyright procedures

All music, information, images and games on the Internet are owned by someone. A term called copyright is a legal one and has laws to enforce it. By downloading a freebie you can risk bringing a virus or spyware to the computer or system. These can destroy a computer system or provide hackers with details such as passwords and bank accounts. Remember if an offer is too good to be true, the chances are it is.

Evaluating and using content on the Internet carefully

Not everything on the Internet is true, accurate or unbiased. The school is working to teach information literacy skills, which enables students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively on the Internet. Copying and pasting information can help organise arguments, ideas, and information, but it is important that your child uses their own thoughts and language to express what they have learnt.

Not interfering with network security, the data of another user or attempt to log into the network with a user name or password of another student

Computer facilities are for the use of all students so due care should be taken at all times when using these resources. Students are responsible for everything done using their accounts, and everything in their home directories. To this end students need to keep their password secret and not gain access to other students' login details.

Seeking teacher assistance

The Internet has some flashy and tricky ways to lead users into some websites they never meant to visit. It is easy for us all to get distracted. We want students to ask for help in locating the information they need, and clarifying the task they have been set. Unfocused clicking through websites can lead to inappropriate content.

We also want the whole school community to keep their Internet environment as safe as possible so we ask your child if they see a site they think should be blocked to turn off their screen and let a teacher know.

Open communication between parents, teachers and students is the best way to keep students safe. If you have any concerns about this agreement or Internet Safety in general, contact either the school or NetAlert Australia's Internet safety advisory body on 1800 880 176 or visit <http://www.netaert.gov.au>

Links to related documents:

[DECV Online Terms of Use](#)

[DECV Social Media Policy](#)

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