



Saint Mary MacKillop College

Technology Policy and Procedures

(February, 2024)

Rationale for the Technology Policy of SMMC

St Mary MacKillop Colleges is born out of a vision for an institution that should prioritise the spiritual formation and academic excellence of its students. Such a vision envisages an environment for students, that is not dominated by the current educational fads of the day, which now includes the increasing use of entertainment-driven technology as a teaching and learning tool.

That scientific literature which is more objective and valid indicates that technology in schools leads to:

Poorer-

- Reading comprehension skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Skills of mastery and memorisation
- Use of time in learning
- Concentration and attention skills
- Choice of resources for students
- Handwriting skills
- Academic outcomes for students
- Teaching skills for teachers.

And:

Greater-

- Financial costs to schools
- Inequity between wealthier and poorer students
- Workload for teachers
- Misuse of technology by students
- Distraction to students
- Cyber security threats to schools
- Student addiction to screens
- Cyber-bullying issues
- Risk of student depression, anxiety and obesity.

Glossary of Terms:

Information Technology: “ The science and activity of using computers and software to store, generate and send information.”

Personal Devices: This refers to all devices which are capable of communication, internet access, audio or visual recording and/or playback and digital screen use. This also includes devices resembling internet-accessible devices. The inclusion of a device under this definition is at the discretion of the school.

Television/Audio-Visual Material: Television programmes, audio-visual clips, films or movies.

Rationale:

The following are assumed in the SMMC Technology Policy:

- That the school has an obligation to provide for its students an optimal and safe learning environment caters for their spiritual, moral, physical and psychological welfare by means of the best of evidence-based teaching and learning methods.
- That there is very little, if any, scientifically valid or reliable data supporting the use of IT to improve the academic achievement in students under the age of 16.
- That there are copious scientifically valid and reliable data supporting the adverse mental and physical outcomes associated with students under the age of 16 using personal devices for non-educational purposes during a school day.
- That it is extremely difficult to meet the expectations of a school such as SMMC regarding supervision of students using IT.
- That parents should be kept informed as to the current knowledge on IT in education and its influence on their children in general.
- That the school’s priorities lie in a unique education that provides students the freedom to focus on the most important aspects of life such as the development of virtue, the cultivation of good friendships and the contemplation of the Divine.

Scope of the Policy:

The school’s technology policy covers the use of information technology and television/audio-visual equipment and may be divided into:

- **Personal devices** (e.g. phone, tablet, laptop, Smartwatch) vs **School Devices** (e.g. laptop)
- **Non-educational material** vs **Educational material**
- **Home use** vs **School use**

The outline of the school policy involves a general prohibition on:

- Personal Devices (K-12) in school hours. (NB: No Smart phones K-12. Mobile phones – no internet access).
- The non-educational use of technology on the school campus (K-12).
- The use of technology in self-directed research or other projects.
- The unauthorised use of technology for classroom work (K-10)
- The required use of technology for work set for home-study.

The general rules involving the use of IT for primary and secondary students are:

Years K-6:

- No personal devices or school devices.
- Essentially no IT except as word-processors for typing class (NAPLAN) and NESA syllabus mandate areas, or after Principal approval (e.g. for special student needs or extraordinary circumstances).

Years 7-10:

- No personal devices
- Essentially no IT except as word-processors for typing class (NAPLAN) and NESA syllabus - mandate areas, or under teacher direction and after Principal approval.
- Television and audio-visual use to follow NSW DOE guidelines as well as due consideration of matters re parental approval, Catholic faith and morality and the law related to broadcast categories of offensive material.

Years 11-12:

- No personal devices except personal laptops.
- Educational use of IT as directed by Year 11 and 12 teaching staff and/or required by the relevant NESA syllabuses (laptops generally sans earphones).
- Educational use of IT as required for distance education classes.
- Television and audio-visual use to follow NSW DOE guidelines as well as due consideration of matters re parental approval, Catholic faith and morality and the law related to broadcast categories re offensive material.

Exemptions:

- Teachers seeking to use IT in the classroom must make application to the Principal for an exemption, citing the Year Level, Subject, Syllabus outcomes, and the reasons for its use, as well as the dates on which it is to be used, or if easier, the term and week dates.
- Parents seeking any exemptions for their children regarding personal devices, should complete and submit the *Responsible Use of Digital Devices Agreement* form. Any other exemption request should be detailed to the Principal in writing.

Consequences to Breaches of the Technology Policy

Due Process:

It is recognised that students may make genuine errors in their interpretation of the technology policy. Therefore students breaching expectations of the use of IT must be referred to the Pastoral Care Coordinator and the Principal, to ensure that each student is given the benefit of due process.

What Constitutes an Infringement?

A student infringement of this school policy is considered to be one or more of the following (but not limited to these.)

Category One:

Failure to hand in a permitted personal technology when required.

Category Two:

Unauthorised use or misuse of any personal technology:

- on the school premises
- when in transit between school and home,
- during any part of an off-campus school-based curricular/non-curricular activity

PENALTIES FOR INFRINGEMENTS:

An allegation of an infringement of school policy will be referred to the relevant Pastoral Care Coordinator who will carefully investigate the allegation.

If the allegation is sustained, the following procedures may be followed:

Category One Infringement:

The students will be referred to the Principal who will notify the parents of the infringement and may confiscate the device until the end of the day. Further measures may be enforced at the discretion of the Principal.

Category Two Infringement:

The students will be referred to the Principal who will seek an explanation and notify the parents of the infringement:

If it is a first offence, the Principal will warn the student and his/her parents that the next culpable infringement by the student may incur suspension and the confiscation of the device for a determined period, unless deemed inadvisable. The Principal will negotiate with the parents and decide on a suitable penalty for the first offence.

If it is a second offence, suspension may be applied and the confiscation of the device for a determined period, unless deemed inadvisable. The Principal will warn the student and his/her parents that a subsequent culpable infringement may incur expulsion from SMMC.

INFRINGEMENT RECORD

A student's record of infringements of the *Use of Personal Technologies* will be reviewed from Kindergarten to Year 6 (i.e. in Primary School Years) and again from Year 7 to Year 12 (i.e. Middle and High School Years), or as determined as necessary by the Principal. A student's infringement record will be considered a major factor in determining his/her continued enrolment.

COMMUNICATING THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURE TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

This policy and procedure will be available to all students and parents at the commencement of each year via hardcopy from administration or digitally from the school website. It will also be attached to the *Responsible Use of Digital Devices Agreement* sent home to parents at the beginning of each academic year.

Preventative Measures:

It is important that in order to ensure the technological safety and responsibility of all, both parents and students are aware of SMMC's commitment to enforcing this policy. To this end, SMMC ensures easy access to this policy for both parents and staff as well as providing a summarised version for students.

Complaints

If a student, parent, or legal guardian has a complaint with any implementation of this policy, they should follow the school's *Suggestions, Complaints and Grievance Policy* found on the school's website.

Review

In order to ensure best practice, this policy will be reviewed annually by the SMMC Executive.