

Digital Technology at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre



Information for parents

Our commitment to the responsible use of digital technology

At Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre (Blackwood) we are committed to building a culture of respect and responsibility. While Blackwood is a Residential School focused on outdoor learning, we do occasionally include access to iPads to compliment this learning. We teach our students about responsible digital behaviours in relation to completing the lessons while using iPads.

During their stay at Blackwood, many students have access to iPads and technology devices from their home school and on occasions from their home. While these are primarily onsite to support communication and comprehension, they are also used during down time within the program. When accessing technology devices from their home school or home while at Blackwood, students are required to abide by their home school Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA).

What we do

	We set clear expectations - We have clear expectations about appropriate conduct using digital technologies. - We have clear and appropriate consequences when students breach these expectations, in line with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy.
	We teach appropriate conduct We teach our students how to be safe, intentional and responsible users of digital technologies in relation to the lesson where they are being given access to digital technology provided by Blackwood
	We provide access to technology - We provide access to educational software through Apps on an iPad for students to use. - QR Scanner - Forms to complete a Survey - Stellarium - Star Walk & Star Walk for Kids - Frog ID - Vic Field Guide - Proloquo2Go
	We supervise digital learning - We supervise students using digital technologies in the classroom, consistent with our duty of care. - We use clear protocols and procedures to protect students working in online spaces.
	We take appropriate steps to protect students - We provide a filtered internet service to block inappropriate content. Full protection from inappropriate content cannot be guaranteed, however, we have processes to report and act on inappropriate content. - We may access and monitor messages and files sent or saved on our network, if necessary and appropriate.
	We appropriately manage and respond to online incidents - We work to prevent, respond, and learn from issues or incidents relating to the use of digital technology, including cybersecurity incidents, cyberbullying and risks to child safety. - We refer suspected illegal online acts to the police.

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How parents and carers can help

Below are our suggestions for ways you can support your children to responsibly use digital technology.

	Establish clear routines • Talk to your child about expectations including when, where, and how digital devices can be used at home, ensuring these rules are age-appropriate and consistent. These can include: ◦ Requiring devices to be used in a common area, such as a living room or kitchen ◦ Setting up a specific area for charging devices overnight, away from bedrooms, to promote better sleep hygiene. • Be present when your child is using digital devices, especially for younger children who may not yet understand online risks.
	Restrict inappropriate content • Use built-in parental controls on devices and apps to help manage their device access and restrict inappropriate content, including apps and websites that are not suitable for their age group. • Consider restricting the use of non-educational apps and apps with addictive game mechanics (e.g. rewards, badges, limited exit options).
	Talk about online safety • Talk with your child about the importance of protecting personal information and recognising online scams. • Talk with your child about age restrictions on social media and explore other ways they can connect with their friends online and offline. • Encourage your child to talk to you or another trusted adult if they feel unsafe online.
	Model responsible and balanced technology use • Encourage a healthy balance between screen time and offline activities, especially outdoor unstructured play and time with friends and family, face-to-face. * • Demonstrate responsible and balanced tech use in your own daily routine to set a good example for your child.
	Work with us • Let your child's teacher know about concerns you have regarding their technology use • Keep informed about what your child is learning at school, so you can help reinforce positive messages at home.

*Australia's physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines include the following recommendations for children between 5-17 years-old regarding sedentary recreational screen time:

- no more than 2 hours of sedentary recreational screen time per day
- avoiding screen time 1 hour before sleep
- keeping screens out of the bedroom.

Source: Australia's physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines, <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians/for-children-and-young-people-5-to-17-years>.

Support for parents and carers

To learn more about how to support the safe, intentional and responsible use of digital technologies at home, the eSafety Commissioner provides [resources for parents](#), and outlines available [counselling and support services](#).