



Topic:	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) – Student Use
Policy No:	B-3A
Policy Area:	Education
Date For Review:	2022

1. Rationale

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been introduced into schools predominantly through email and the internet. 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 a risk of exposure to inappropriate and offensive material and personal safety.

In accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, the practice of communication must be totally honest and reflect the highest standard of accountability and sensitivity to human rights and relationships.

2. Definitions

'Information and Communication Technology (ICT)' means all computer hardware, software, systems and technology including the internet, email, and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook) and telecommunications devices (e.g. mobile phones) in facilities that may be used or accessed from a school campus or connected to a school's communication network. However, it may also include a situation where a staff member, a student or community member is the subject.

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

Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying is unlawful behaviour as defined in the Catholic Education Commission Policy Statement 2-B4: 'Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying'.

Email or electronic mail is defined as a system for sending and receiving messages over communications networks.

Cybersafety is the safe and responsible use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

3. Principles

- 3.1 The Mercy College ICT is provided for educational purposes only.
- 3.2 Using Mercy College ICT is a privilege. This privilege can be removed if school rules are broken. Students using the school's ICT must not break State or Commonwealth laws (a summary of these laws is an attachment to this policy and forms part of this policy).
- 3.3 The school has the right to check all written, graphic, audio and other materials created, produced, communicated, stored or accessed on school ICT by students, including emails. The school also has the right to check all written graphic, audio and other materials created, produced, communicated, stored or accessed where the content relates to the College, students, staff or member of the Mercy College community.
- 3.4 Students shall be made aware that access to ICT, the internet and email can expose them to inappropriate material or potential harm.

- 3.5 Students shall take personal responsibility when using the school's ICT services by protecting their personal information and data, maintaining the required level of security, respecting the privacy of others, respecting the legal boundaries of licensing and copyright, using language appropriate to the school's expectations and taking good care of all ICT equipment.
- 3.6 E-mail has the same permanence and legal status as written hardcopy (paper) documents and may be subject to disclosure obligations in exactly the same way. Copies of e-mails may therefore have to be made available to third parties.

4. Procedures

4.1 Mercy College is committed to ensuring all students are aware of standards for the use of ICT within the school environment. Consequently, unacceptable use shall not be tolerated under any circumstances and disciplinary action shall be taken against any student who breaches this policy.

4.2 Mercy College shall identify acceptable and unacceptable use of ICT and is committed to regularly updating this policy.

4.2.1 Acceptable use shall include but is not limited to:

- researching information relating to assignments*
- gathering specific information about subjects/topics*
- emailing a teacher or friend for assistance with school related work
- other teacher directed activities.

* Students shall exercise caution as to the quality and accuracy of the information they are accessing or transmitting.

4.2.2 Unacceptable use shall include but is not limited to:

- accessing networks without school authorisation whilst at school or on school equipment
- transmitting or deliberately accessing and/or receiving material that may be considered inappropriate, which includes threatening, sexually explicit or harassing materials, offensive or discriminatory materials or material that may be harmful either physically or emotionally, which includes bullying or harassment of fellow students or others outside the school
- communicating information concerning any password, identifying code or other confidential information or violating the security of the system in any way
- interfering with or disrupting network users, services or equipment. Disruptions include but are not limited to distribution of unsolicited advertising, propagation of viruses, in any form, and using the network to make unauthorised entry to any other machine accessible via the network
- plagiarising and/or breaching copyright laws, including software copyright and re-engineering of software
- conducting private business matters or using the system for any personal gain
- downloading and/or installing software programs (eg .exe files), videos, music, picture galleries, greeting cards, screen savers and games etc without the permission of the school.

4.2.3 Unlawful use shall include but is not limited to:

- defaming someone or an organisation
- infringing copyright laws ie reproducing or adapting copyrighted material by downloading and further disseminating the material
- sending emails that could constitute sexual discrimination or sexual harassment
- sending emails that could constitute cyber bullying or harassment
- displaying sexually offensive or explicit material
- making offensive or insulting statements based on the race, colour or nationality of a person
- undertaking activities which breach State and Commonwealth laws.

4.3 The use of email is an acceptable form of communication but must be used appropriately.

4.2.2 Acceptable use shall include but is not limited to:

- Be polite and formal when sending e-mails
- Apply the standards and formats of a formal letter or memo to all of your e-mail communications
- Check e-mails carefully (as you would a letter typed on Mercy College letterhead)

- 4.2.3 Unacceptable use shall include but is not limited to:
- Use rude or offensive language
 - Send any message which contains content which conflicts with the views of the Catholic Church, Mercy Vision and Values and the School Ethos

4.4 Cyber bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, mobile phone, instant messaging, and defamatory personal web-sites, to support the repeated, harmful and negative behaviour by an individual or group towards another individual or group.

- 4.2.4 Cyber bullying can involve:
- sending defamatory, threatening or harassing messages, phone calls, offensive photographs or sounds;
 - the purposeful spreading of inaccurate information, such as making-up and passing on rumours;
 - distributing someone else's personal information, such as passing on someone's phone numbers, web-addresses; and personal details without their permission;
 - sending spam, viruses or offensive web-links; and
 - the posting of information, or photos or images without the permission of the subject of the information, photo or image.

- 4.2.5 If you are cyber bullied:
- Do not reply to threatening, harassing or obscene messages.
 - Block the sender's messages, or change your e-mail, web-address, or mobile phone number if necessary.
 - Save any threatening or harassing messages and report them to your parents, school or Internet Service Provider; or the Police if appropriate.
 - Do not open unknown attachments or links.
 - If a friend or someone you know is cyber bullied, give them this same advice.
 - Report on MercyNoBullying@cewa.edu.au

- 4.2.6 If you witness cyber bullying:
- Report on MercyNoBullying@cewa.edu.au
 - Offer support to the victim
 - Do not support/encourage the bullying

4.5 Unacceptable and/or unlawful (may be reported to the appropriate authorities) use of ICT systems constitute a breach of school rules and may warrant disciplinary action which may include exclusion of the student in accordance with the school's disciplinary policy.

4.6 This policy is available through the Mercy College website

4.7 It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the Mercy College ICT policy. All Year 7 – 12 students are expected to adhere to the following *Acceptable Use Agreement*.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Acceptable Use Agreement

This Acceptable Use Agreement has six conditions or facets of being a Digital Citizen, which is a requirement for the use of ICT resources at Mercy College. Failure to comply will be dealt with appropriately as per the policies of the College.

1. **Respect Yourself.**

I will show respect for myself through my actions. This means I will:

- Select online names that are appropriate
- Consider the information and images that I post online
- Not post personal information about my life, experiences, experimentation or relationships
- Not be obscene.

2. **Protect Yourself.**

I will ensure that the information I post online will not put me at risk. This means I will:

- Not publish my personal details, contact details or a schedule of my activities
- Report any attacks or inappropriate behaviour directed at me
- Protect passwords, accounts and resources.
- When communicating electronically with teachers and other members of the Mercy Community, use the tools provided by the College.
- Not try to disable or avoid College security and monitoring systems

3. **Respect Others.**

I will show respect to others. This means I will

- Report any damage/vandalism
- Not vandalise or damage any equipment or resources
- Not use electronic mediums to flame, bully, harass or stalk other people
- Show respect for other people in my choice of websites
- Not visit sites that are degrading, pornographic, racist or inappropriate
- Not abuse my rights of access
- Not enter other people's spaces or areas.

4. **Protect Others.**

I will protect others by

- Reporting abuse
- Not forwarding inappropriate materials or communications
- Not visiting sites that are degrading, pornographic, racist or inappropriate.
- Not excessively using resources such as printing, bandwidth and download quotas

5. **Don't Steal.**

I will

- Not steal media or information
- Will purchase, license and register all software, music and other media
- Refrain from distributing these.

6. **Honour Intellectual Property.**

I will

- Request permission to use resources
- Suitably cite any and all use of websites, books, media etc.

By using the ICT resources at Mercy College, you have agreed to abide by the above points. Failure to comply will be dealt with appropriately as described in the appropriate College policies.

5. References

Bishops of Western Australia 2009, Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia: 2009-2015
Catholic Education Commission policy statement 2-B8 Information and Communication Technology use by Students
Catholic Education Commission policy statement 2-C4 Harassment, Unlawful Discrimination, Victimisation and Bullying
Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)
Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)
Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Enforcement Act 1996
Criminal Code Act (WA)
Cybercrime Act 2001 (Cth)
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

6. Related Documents

Mercy College policy statement B-3B Social Media - Use by Students
Mercy College policy statement B-3C Mobile Phone Policy
Mercy College policy statement C-5A Information and Communication Technology – Use of Staff
Mercy College policy statement C-5B Social Media - Use by Staff
CECWA policy statement 2-C15 Information and Communication Technology Use by Staff

7. Review History

Year of Review	Reviewed By	Amendments/Review
2014		Originally released
2015	Julie Hornby	Reviewed
2021	Donna Bird	Reviewed

8. Next Review

Year	Mercy College Standing Committee Responsible
2024	Donna Bird