

Secondary student digital device policy

This is a mandated policy under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this policy must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting operational policies](#) page.

Overview

This policy underpins implementation of the Secondary student device program, an initiative of the [Digital Strategy 2023 to 2026: Embracing Today, Shaping Tomorrow](#). The program supports secondary students' access to personal digital devices for learning in school and at home, with the overarching goal of achieving 1:1 device to student access ratio in secondary schools.

Digital technologies are reshaping the world we live in. Research establishes that appropriately designed learning activities that make use of personal digital devices have a range of benefits for student learning. Meaningful adoption and use of devices enables:

- improved independence
- learning flexibility
- ability to research
- communication and collaboration.^{1 2}

One-to-one access to personal digital devices has been shown to lift academic achievement, including improvements in literacy and numeracy.³ Other research suggests personal digital device use can enable a 'dynamic, exciting learning environment' and it can help with 'levelling the playing field' by connecting all students to 'online content and tools regardless of location, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status'.⁴ Personal digital devices also remove barriers for students with special needs and students who are second language learners.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Principals of government schools

¹ Blikstad-Balas, M & Davies, C 2017, 'Assessing the education value of one-to-one devices: have we been asking the right questions', *Oxford review of education*, vol. 43, no. 3, pp.311-331

² Wei, K, Teo, H, Chan, H & Tan, B 2011, 'Conceptualizing and testing a social cognitive model of the digital divide', *Information Systems Research*, vol. 22, no.1, pp.170–187

³ Newton, C 2017, *Towards Digital Enablement: A literature review*, New Zealand Ministry of Education

⁴ Newton, C 2017, *Towards Digital Enablement: A literature review*, New Zealand Ministry of Education



- Teachers and educators at government schools
- All other staff at government schools
- Secondary students at government schools.

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Detail

Objective

The objective of this policy is to ensure that all secondary students in schools have an up-to-date digital device for their exclusive use for learning at school and at home. This will enable students:

- to access digitally-enabled learning
- to acquire and develop digital literacy skills which the Australian Curriculum expects and are critical for success outside of school and in current and future careers
- to learn in a variety of environments and at times that best suit their learning.

Background

The department has launched its [Digital Strategy 2023 to 2026: Embracing Today, Shaping Tomorrow](#) (the strategy), which outlines:

- how we can use digital technology to empower schools and preschools to deliver highly effective education
- how we can help children and students to thrive in a digital world.

The department has invested heavily in setting up our schools and preschools with the right digital foundations – connecting sites to high-speed internet, upgrading ICT infrastructure and implementing a suite of modern, user-centred digital platforms.

The strategy builds on these foundations, providing a sustained focus on digital improvement at a whole-system level, and the advice, resources and support that schools and preschools need to support their improvement.

Secondary student device program

The Secondary student device program is an opt-in program which assists schools in purchasing devices to help them achieve the department's required device to student access ratio of 1:1 in secondary school contexts, and improve the standard and consistency of devices across our system.

Schools not opting into the program, will still be required to meet the 1:1 device to student access ratio. It is up to schools to decide how they will meet the requirement based on their individual school context.

This may involve providing a device to students at no cost, reduced cost or full cost to parents/caregivers of non-School card secondary students in Years 7 and 10. Schools will continue to choose how they administer their local device arrangements, aligned to existing individual device provisioning models. Families of School card secondary students are not to be charged for the cost of devices, either in part or full.

Irrespective of participation in the school device program, schools will have a grace period until the end of the 2026 school year to meet these new policy settings. Schools are encouraged to consider

implementation relevant to their context, which may include a phased approach to ensure ratios are met in their entirety over this time.

Eligibility requirements for Secondary student device program

- Must be on the SWiFT network
- Provision of digital devices is to be made with no mandatory charge to families/caregivers of School card secondary students
- A pool of loan devices is to be retained, available to students when they experience breakage, loss or technical issues
- Ensure that devices are refreshed at the end of their optimal lifecycle
- Application of suitable local policies with advice for appropriate usage as well as breakage and loss
- A commitment to participating in an annual device census to track progress towards the goal of 1:1 digital device to student ratio across all secondary schools
- Where possible, secondary students must be able to take digital devices home for the purposes of flexible and extended learning.

Secondary student device requirements

Minimum device standards

The general principle is that the standard of devices must ensure that they will reliably and effectively carry out the functions that secondary students require as part of their education. Minimum specifications will be outlined upon application to the program and may change as technology and curriculum requirements develop over time.

Purchasing digital devices

Schools opting into the program will purchase digital devices through the department's provisioning arrangements for student devices. By purchasing devices through the department [directly or via a vendor we negotiate with] schools will benefit from:

- a reduced administrative burden associated with procurement
- bulk purchasing discounts negotiated by the department
- multi-year repayment options
- more consistency in secondary student's digital devices to ensure better supportability.

School card students

Personal digital devices for secondary School card students in Years 7 and 10 are to be purchased by the school from within the school's resources. The department will contribute 50% towards the budgeted cost of each digital device purchased for School card students in Years 7 and 10 via the Secondary student device program, with schools required to fund the remaining 50%.

Parents and caregivers of secondary School card students are not required to contribute to the cost of digital devices. It will be open to schools to seek nominal voluntary contributions from School Card families.

Roles and responsibilities

Information and Communication Technology Services

Division

Monitor, evaluate and review this policy to ensure that secondary students are being provided with the digital devices they need for their education.

Design and run program to assist schools.

Develop and implement a communications strategy (with Communications Directorate) to ensure that secondary schools are aware of this policy and of support available to assist with implementation.

Negotiate purchasing arrangements with ICT vendors and set up arrangements for sites to purchase digital devices that minimise administration and costs.

Annually review the minimum device standards.

Administer an annual device census/attestation to ensure student to device ratios are met.

Principals

Responsible for implementing digital device initiatives to achieve the required student to device to access ratio of 1:1 across their secondary school.

Complete an annual device census/attestation to ensure student to device ratios are met.

Employees

Support the implementation of Secondary student digital device program.

Definitions

digital device

A laptop, notebook or tablet that uses wireless/mobile telecommunication technology, and that is for the exclusive use of the secondary student to whom it is allocated.

SWiFT network

Schools With internet Fibre Technologies.

Supporting information

[Improve student access to devices through the School Device Program](#)

Related legislation

[Education and Children's Services Act 2019](#)

Related policies

[Mobile communication devices procedure](#)

[Provision of mobile communication devices procedure](#)

[ICT cyber security standard](#)

Record history

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Approvals

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Policy officer: Senior Policy Adviser, Strategic Operations and Reform

Policy sponsor: Assistant Director, Strategic Operations and Reform

Responsible executive director: Chief Information Officer

Approved by: Assistant Director, Strategic Operations and Reform

Approval date: 15 September 2023

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Revision record

Version: 1.1

Approved by: Assistant Director, Strategic Operations and Reform

Approved date: 15 September 2023

Review date: 15 September 2026

Amendment(s): Included the required timeframe in which device ratios need to be achieved by primary and secondary schools, which is the end of 2026 school year.

Version: 1.0

Approved by: Chief Information Officer

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Review date: 25 August 2026

Amendment(s): New policy - underpins initiatives established in the 'Digital Strategy 2023 to 2026: Embracing Today, Shaping Tomorrow'.

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