



WILLIAM CLARKE  
COLLEGE  
CHRIST OUR WISDOM

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP



WHERE *EXTRAORDINARY* BEGINS

# OVERVIEW

In a world which is characterised by frequent, rapid and transformative technological change, it is becoming ever more important to prepare young people for an increasingly online world. At William Clarke College, we believe that it is crucial to develop young people as effective and positive 'Digital Citizens' who use technologies competently, ethically and discerningly.

Digital Citizenship is a broad concept which incorporates many skills, attributes and qualities. It involves students developing an understanding and acceptance of the accepted norms of appropriate and responsible behaviour regarding the use of digital tools<sup>1</sup>. Digital citizens also recognise the responsibilities and opportunities that come from interacting with technologies and take active steps to help keep themselves and others safe online<sup>2</sup>. Digital citizens can effectively participate in online society and are able to create and consume digital content in positive and beneficial ways without causing negative effects to others<sup>3</sup>.

At the College, we want to develop digital citizens who embody the traits of extraordinary learners and who work to cultivate the attributes of a Christ-centred community when working in the online world. As such, the College has developed capability statements which reflect two key areas of learning – 'My Digital Life and Identity' and 'My Digital Relationships'.

<sup>1</sup> ACARA. n.d. Glossary. <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10curriculum/technologies/glossary/?letter=D>.

<sup>2</sup> International Society for Technology Education. 2025. ISTE Standards for Students. <https://iste.org/standards/students#1-2-digital-citizen>.

<sup>3</sup> Education Services Australia - Australian Government. n.d. Digital Citizenship. Digital Technologies Hub





# DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP CAPABILITIES

It is the College’s desire that as digital citizens, our students are able to do the following:

My Digital Life and Identity	1. Maintain positive and healthy digital habits that support their wellbeing and balanced lifestyle
	2. Manage their online identity authentically while understanding their digital footprint and online responsibilities
	3. Protect themselves and others from dangerous content and digital threats through strong and proactive security practices and risk awareness
	4. Critically evaluate digital information to distinguish between credible sources and misinformation
	5. Act ethically online by respecting intellectual property, and navigating online challenges and digital dilemmas with integrity, compassion and humility
My Digital Relationships	6. Adapt to emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence (AI) by learning new tools responsibly and thinking critically about their impact
	7. Build positive digital relationships by responding constructively to conflict and acting as upstanders in instances of digital conflict and harassment
	8. Communicate respectfully across all digital platforms using appropriate etiquette and language.

# DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM STRUCTURES

In order to deliver a structured program to develop digital citizens, the College will utilise various structures and partnerships. This will include:

## Student Focused Experiences

We integrate content covering digital skills, citizenship and responsible online behaviour into classroom learning (particularly through relevant curriculum in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) (K–10), Library (K–6), Science and Technology (P–6) and Technology (Years 7–8)). Where appropriate, further Digital Citizenship content and skills will also be addressed in the Character Program.

Students also participate in age-appropriate group experiences including expert presentations (such as ySafe and Police Liaison incursions), Year Group meetings and assemblies addressing current digital challenges.

Finally, the College also maintains clear expectations through our proactive classroom management of student devices and through student policies, including our annual Technology Responsible User Agreement that all students sign to demonstrate their commitment to appropriate technology use at school.

## Parent/Carer College Partnerships

We believe parents/carers are essential partners in developing healthy digital citizens. We support families by providing current information about emerging technologies, online safety issues, and home device management through our Online Safety Hub (maintained by ySafe) and targeted information evenings and workshops. In addition to these seminars, we provide practical tools like Qustodio’s Parental Controls for managing technology at home. The College also seeks to create opportunities for community support through events where families connect with each other and discuss digital challenges, readiness indicators and milestones together, facilitated by relevant College staff.

As supportive partners in digital citizenship education, it is the College’s desire that parents/carers look to mirror or adopt some of the articulated College ‘stances’ on digital devices covered later in this document in the home environment.

## Teacher Professional Learning

Our teachers receive comprehensive professional learning to effectively guide students to develop their digital citizenship. We maintain and regularly update our College Position Statement on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) pedagogies, which provides clear guidelines for classroom device management, consistent approaches to digital learning, and approved tools for common activities like notetaking and collaboration. College staff model and plan safe and healthy digital practices to students and ensure that access to the curriculum in class is not predicated on the ownership of a mobile phone.

Teachers participate in regular upskilling on emerging technologies including AI, ensuring they stay current with digital developments that impact student learning and ways they can utilise these tools to enhance teaching and learning. We’re also developing a comprehensive Digital Citizenship Scope and Sequence that maps the progression of digital skills and knowledge from Prep to Year 12, helping teachers understand expected milestones and identify opportunities to embed digital citizenship learning within existing programs.



# COLLEGE ‘STANCES’ ON DIGITAL DEVICES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

To support young people in using technology responsibly, it's important that devices are managed carefully and match their age and needs. Drawing on current research and best practice, the College suggests the following recommended 'stances' for families. These guidelines are designed to help families make thoughtful decisions about technology, resist peer pressure and provide a consistent approach within the community. By working together, we can address technology-related challenges more effectively, making it easier for individual families to maintain healthy boundaries at home.

## **1. Smartphones: wait until they're ready, and generally this is not until high school**

If you must reach your child earlier, give them a kids' smartwatch or a basic call-and-text 'dumb' phone. Readiness indicators can be found in the appendix

## **2. Devices live and sleep in a shared space**

All devices (for children P-12) charge overnight in the kitchen or living room—not unsupervised in bedrooms or bathrooms

## **3. Set the rules for devices together—then model them**

Decide together what's okay regarding where you use devices, when you use them and what you use them for. Voice concerns early and, as parents or carers, follow the same rules you set for your children to help reinforce them.

# COLLEGE ‘STANCES’ ON DIGITAL DEVICES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**4. Make time for face-to-face**

As a family, have routines and times which are unplugged from screens where relationships and face-to-face interactions are prioritised

**5. No social media before 16**

Hold the line with the incoming ‘Social Media Delay’ (*Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 (Online Safety Act 2021)*) and have conversations with your young person about how they can positively engage with social media when the time comes

**6. Keep an eye on their online world and set boundaries through parental controls**

Use parental controls (e.g., free Qustodio licence on College devices) to filter illegal or inappropriate content on ALL devices your young person uses

**7. Know the apps and help your young person spot the traps**

Learn the online places your child visits and watch for unhelpful ‘hooks’ like infinite scroll, recommender systems, streaks and push notifications that keep your young person on their devices. Our Online Safety Hub has plain-English guides with tips on how to manage these tools whenever you need them.



Primary means of coverage		
Please note that each capability may also be covered through other College structures.		
<p><b>Covered explicitly in Curriculum</b> (primarily PDHPE, Library (P-6), Science and Technology (P-6) or Technology (Years 7-12)</p> <p><i>* New PDHPE and Science and Technology Syllabi for implementation from 2027</i></p>	<p><b>Covered explicitly</b> in the Character Program</p>	<p><b>Covered implicitly</b> (through assemblies, Year Group meetings, informal teacher/mentor discussions etc)</p>

Smartphone Readiness – questions to ask before providing a smartphone to your child

- Has your child demonstrated that they are consistently responsible with the technology they already use? Do they show an ability to manage their screen time/disengage freely? Have they looked after other devices? Have they accessed appropriate or inappropriate content?
- Does your child follow current family guidelines/rules around screen time? If not, what would your child need to do differently to show they are ready for additional technology?
- Is your child willing to discuss their online or offline experiences with you? Do they come to you if there is a problem or something they don't understand? Is your child likely to raise with you a problem that could be caused by having a smartphone?
- Has your child demonstrated an understanding of good habits regarding digital safety and privacy? Are they thoughtful about the information they disclose or provide to others?
- Has your child demonstrated an ability to make positive decisions offline? Have they shown ability to interact positively with other people when face-to-face? Do they recognise when they've made a mistake and try to make amends?

The age at which to provide a young person a smartphone is variable and based on individual temperament and indications of readiness. Having a smartphone signals a significant increase in responsibility and access and it is important that parents/carers consider whether a child is genuinely ready for this. It is also helpful for parents/carers to reflect whether they are ready for this change. Young people will benefit greatly if their parent/carer actively manages their smartphone usage (in developmentally appropriate ways) and be prepared to have conversations about accepted family boundaries and standards, as well as about the types of content young people might come across when using these devices.

These questions can also be the basis for parents/carers to have conversations with their children about when the right time might be to give their child a smartphone.

Adapted from:  
Orlando, J. (2025, January 29). How can you tell if your child is ready for a smartphone? What are the alternatives? The Conversation. <http://theconversation.com/how-can-you-tell-if-your-child-is-ready-for-a-smartphone-what-are-the-alternatives-248224>





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