

Primary 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 Primary student device program, an initiative of the [Digital Strategy 2023 to 2026: Embracing Today, Shaping Tomorrow](#). The program supports primary students' access to digital devices for learning in school, with the overarching goal of achieving 1:3 device to student access ratio across the whole-of-school level in primary 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}

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.'³

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Principals of government schools
- Teachers and educators at government schools
- All other staff at 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



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Detail

Objective

The objective of this policy is to ensure that primary students have equitable access to an up-to-date digital device for learning at school. This will enable students to:

- access digitally-enabled learning
- acquire and develop digital literacy skills which the Australian Curriculum expects.

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.

Primary student device program

The Primary 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 1:3 primary 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 1:3 device to student access ratio. It is up to schools to decide how they will meet the requirement based on their individual school context, and sites continue to have autonomy in how they set device to student access ratios. For example, it is likely that there will be more devices made available to students in years 5 and 6, while fewer devices per student in reception to year 2.

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 Primary 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 primary 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 participate in an annual device census to track progress towards the goal of 1:3 digital device to student ratio across all primary schools.

Primary 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 primary 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 primary student's digital devices to ensure better supportability.

By opting into the Primary student device program, the department will contribute 50% towards the budgeted cost of program devices based on a 1:3 whole-of-school ratio. The remaining 50% of the cost of the devices will be paid by schools.

School card students

Personal digital devices for primary level School card students are to be purchased by the school.

Parents and caregivers of primary School card students are not required to contribute to the cost of digital devices.

Roles and responsibilities

Information and Communication Technology Services Division

Monitor, evaluate and review this policy to ensure that primary 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 the Communications Directorate) to ensure that primary 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.

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

Principals

Responsible for implementing digital device initiatives to achieve the required student to device access ratio of 1:3 across their primary school.

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

Employees

Support the implementation of Primary student digital device program.

Definitions

digital device

A laptop, notebook or tablet that uses wireless/mobile telecommunication technology, that is for the use of primary students.

SWiFT network

Schools With internet Fibre Technologies.

Supporting information

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

Related policies

[Mobile communication devices procedure](#)

[Provision of mobile communication devices procedure](#)

[ICT cyber security standard](#)

Record history

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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

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Revision record

Version: 1.1

Approved by: Assistant Director, Strategic Operations and Reform

Approved date: 15 September 2023

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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'.

Contact

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