Education Directorate

To:	Minister for Education and Youth Affairs	**Tracking No.: SUB23/82679**
Date:	24/11/2023	
From:	Executive Branch Manager, Chief Information Officer, Digital Strategy, Services & Transformation	
Subject:	Personal use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy	
Critical Date:	06/12/2023	
Critical Reason:	To meet the national commitment to implement the *Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy* from Week 1, Term 1 2024	

Recommendations

That you:

1. Approve the *Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy* (the Policy) **(Attachment A)**, whereby P-10 students may not use or access mobile phones and other personal communication devices during school hours and college students are subject to a 'put it away' restriction; and

Approved / Not Approved/ Please Discuss

2. Approve the release of the listening report **(Attachment B)** on the public website along with the policy.

Approved / Not Approved / Please Discuss

3. Note the policy *Communications Plan* and *Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Procedures at* **(Attachment C) and (Attachment D).**

Noted / Please Discuss

Yvette Berry MLA ..../...../.....

Minister's Office Feedback

Background

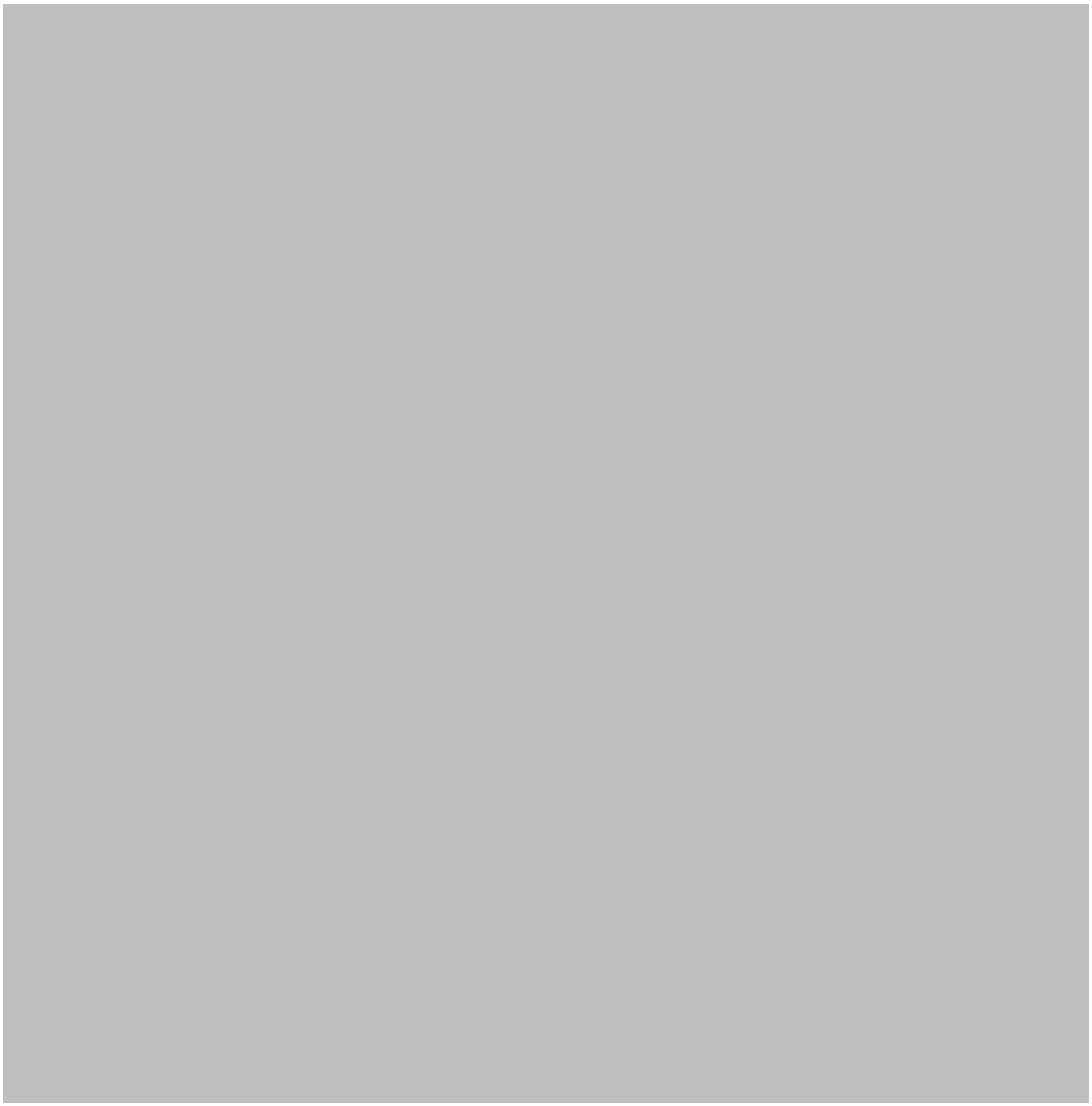
1. On 6 July 2023, the Education Ministers' Meeting agreed to a national commitment to ban, restrict, or manage the use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices by students for personal use in government schools. The design of policy and implementation approaches is the responsibility of jurisdictions and non-government sectors.

[redacted]

3. The ACT Government is ensuring ACT Public School students are provided with appropriate access to digital technologies to support their learning needs.

4. The Education Directorate is working to ensure that students have appropriate opportunities to learn about the safe and appropriate use of mobile devices in different contexts.

[redacted]



Benefits/Sensitivities

39. When these devices are not used well, they can cause, or provide a platform for, distraction and potential serious behavioural and social issues.

Signatory Name:	Mark Stirling	Phone:	6207 5663
Action Officer:	Avon Dissanayake	Phone:	6207 9351

Attachments

Attachment	**Title**
Attachment A	Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy
Attachment B	Listening Report – Mobile Phone Policy Consultation
Attachment C	Communications plan - Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy
Attachment D	Procedures Personal use of communication devices in ACT Public Schools
Attachment E	Implementation of Personal use of communication devices in ACT Public Schools policy letter template

ACT Government | YOURSAY

UNDER EMBARGO

Student mobile phone use in ACT Public Schools

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

The ACT Government is introducing a new policy for the personal use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices in ACT public school classrooms to maintain effective and accessible learning environments for all students.

There is a growing interest in student use of mobile phones and other personal communication devices within ACT public schools. This interest extends to students, parents, carers, the broader community, as well as school leaders and teachers. Currently, the use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices by students in ACT public schools is permitted by two policies: the Acceptable Use of ICT - Parents and Students policy and the Use of Personal Electronic Devices (PED) policy.

In 2023, a comprehensive review of the Personal Electronic Devices (PED) policy in ACT public schools was initiated. This review process involved considering available evidence, addressing community and stakeholder concerns, understanding student requirements, and accommodating the needs of schools. The aim of this policy review is to ensure that ACT public schools and their classrooms remain safe environments that offer effective and accessible learning opportunities to all students.

ACT Government | YOUR SAY

UNDER EMBARGO

Key insights from the community

Policy option preference

1. Most respondents view the impact of mobile phones in classroom environments negatively and associate the use of mobile phones with distraction, addiction, cyberbullying, and damaging to social interaction and active play. Very limited contributions associated mobile phone use in classrooms with positive impacts.

[redacted]

Responsible use education

[redacted]

2. Respondents also included cyber safety, scam prevention, and antibullying as important elements of responsible use education for mobile phones and other devices.

[redacted]

Communications Plan

Project: Mobile phone use in schools policy announcement
Directorate/Business Unit: Education/Service Design and Delivery
Launch/release date: Week 9 (Term 4, 2023)

	○ School support staff • Education Support Office staff

Key messages

What we heard

- From 1 September to 8 October 2023, the ACT Government engaged with ACT public schools, stakeholders and the community to hear their views on mobile phone use in schools.

[redacted]

- From the consultation feedback, we heard:
  - [redacted]
  - Most respondents view the impact of mobile phones in classroom environments negatively and associate the use of mobile phones with distraction, addiction, cyberbullying, and damaging to social interaction and active play.
  - [redacted]

Approved by: Katy Haire
Action officer: Lizzy Green
Date: 27 November 2023

ACT Government
Education

Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools

Procedures

ACT Education Directorate

Document Information

Procedure Identifier: 000121/1

Date Published: [Day/Month/Year i.e. 1 January 2020]

Endorsed by: Executive Governance Committee

Review date: 6/12/2026

It is the responsibility of the user to verify that this is the current and complete version of the document, available on the Directorate's website at http://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policy_a-z.

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This procedure must be read in conjunction with Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy.

1. Overview

1.1. This procedure relates to the Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy (the policy) and describes the mandatory requirements for students in the use of mobile phones and other personal communications devices with the capability of connecting to telecommunication and/or internet networks external to the Education Directorate network.

2. Rationale

2.2. When these devices are not used well, they can cause or provide a platform for distraction and potential serious behavioural and social issues.

RECORD 2

SAFETY ALERT #14

ACT Government Education

SHARING OF EXPLICIT MATERIAL BY STUDENTS

These situations can have serious emotional and legal consequences for all involved.

The issue

There has been an increase in incidents involving the sharing of intimate images amongst students across our secondary schools. This includes cases of image-based abuse, sextortion and bullying.

This alert provides support and advice to help school leaders respond effectively to incidents where explicit material is shared, for example where a student's nude or sexual image or video is taken, shared, or threatened to be shared online. The taking and sharing of explicit images or sexual content is sometimes referred to as 'sexting', with this content often called 'naked selfies' or 'nudes'.

It is crucial to note that these incidents can vary widely in nature and severity. They may range from consensual sharing between peers to non-consensual distribution, or threats of distribution. Regardless of the circumstances, all incidents require prompt, sensitive and appropriate responses from school staff to minimise harm and provide necessary support to affected students.

This alert is a reminder about the importance of ongoing online safety education. Prevention is key. Regular, age-appropriate education on online safety, digital citizenship, and the potential consequences of sharing intimate images can prevent these incidents from occurring.

What schools can do

Incident Response

- Use the Online Safety Incident Response Flow Chart to guide your response.
- Treat all incidents seriously and respond promptly - quick action is crucial, but responses should be well-considered.
- If you believe someone's safety is at immediate risk, call police on 000. If the risk is not immediate, contact your local police station.
- Prioritise student wellbeing and avoid victim-blaming.
- Gather essential information about the incident without unnecessarily viewing the content.
- Notify School Operations. They can provide further guidance and support on the following:
    - Legal considerations
    - Counselling options
    - Content Removal
    - Confidentiality requirements
    - Guidance for families wishing to report

Prevention & Culture Building

- Embed comprehensive online safety education into the curriculum, focusing on the risks of sharing intimate images and the importance of consent.
- Explicitly foster a culture of respect and ethical behaviour in digital spaces.
- Display informative posters and digital signage with consistent online safety messages throughout school premises.
- Establish student-led initiatives to promote responsible online behaviour and support affected peers.

Ongoing Practices and Support

- Offer continued counselling and support services for affected students.
- Maintain open communication with families about online safety issues and school initiatives.
- Embed the F-10 Online Safety Curriculum Connection from the Version 9 Curriculum across levels.
- Encourage open dialogue: Create an environment where students feel comfortable discussing online issues.
- Highlight positive online behaviours: Showcase examples of responsible digital citizenship.
- Involve the whole school community: Engage teachers, students, and families in promoting online safety.
- Stay informed: Keep up to date with emerging online trends and potential risks.

Resources for schools, teachers, parents and carers are updated regularly and collated on the Online Safety (eSafety) Education Shared Google Drive.

By implementing these strategies and maintaining open communication, we can work together to address this serious issue and protect students from the harmful effects of image-based abuse.

Published September 2024

Important Contacts

School Operations: schooloperations@act.gov.au or 6205 3313

Online Safety Education team: EDUeSafety@act.gov.au

Work Health and Safety: whs.edu@act.gov.au or 6207 0614

Resources

Parent Communication Kit - https://bit.ly/3ABVtPg
eSafety Commissioner – www.esafety.gov.au
Australian Federal Police – Think U Know - www.thinkuknow.org.au/
Online Safety Edcation Shared Drive: https://bit.ly/OSE-Drive

From: Pietrukowski, Lee (ACTEDU)
To: Digital Strategy Services and Transformation
Subject: [DSST-70152] FW: Cyber Security Concerns at Kingsford Smith School (KSS)
Date: Friday, 13 February 2026 3:25:29 PM
Attachments: Screenshot 2026-02-11 at 19.48.39.png
image001.jpg
image003.png
image002.jpg
image005.png
image006.png
image007.jpg

OFFICIAL

Good afternoon,
We received the email below from one of our parents.
Would you know who we may direct questions/concerns to?
Have a great day

Lee Pietrukowski
SLB | Education Directorate | ACT Government
E: lee.pietrukowski@ed.act.edu.au
A: Kingsford Smith School, 100 Starke Street, Holt, ACT 2615
W: **www.kss.act.edu.au/**

From: Kingsford Smith School
Sent: Thursday, 12 February 2026 9:29 AM
To: Murtagh, Aisling ; Pietrukowski, Lee
Subject: FW: Cyber Security Concerns at Kingsford Smith School (KSS)

OFFICIAL

Please see email below.
Thanks

Diane Puckett
Front Office Administrator | Education Directorate |ACT Government
P: 61423399
E: diane.puckett@ed.act.edu.au
A: Kingsford Smith School, 100 Starke Street, Holt, ACT 2615
W: **www.kss.act.edu.au/**

From: [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, 11 February 2026 8:05 PM
To: Kingsford Smith School
Cc: berry@act.gov.au; [redacted]
Subject: Cyber Security Concerns at Kingsford Smith School (KSS)

You don't often get email from [redacted] Learn why this is important

Caution: This email originated from outside of the ACT Government. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern,

I write to you as a [redacted] parent around Cybersecurity policies and education regarding student issued Chromebooks.

[redacted]

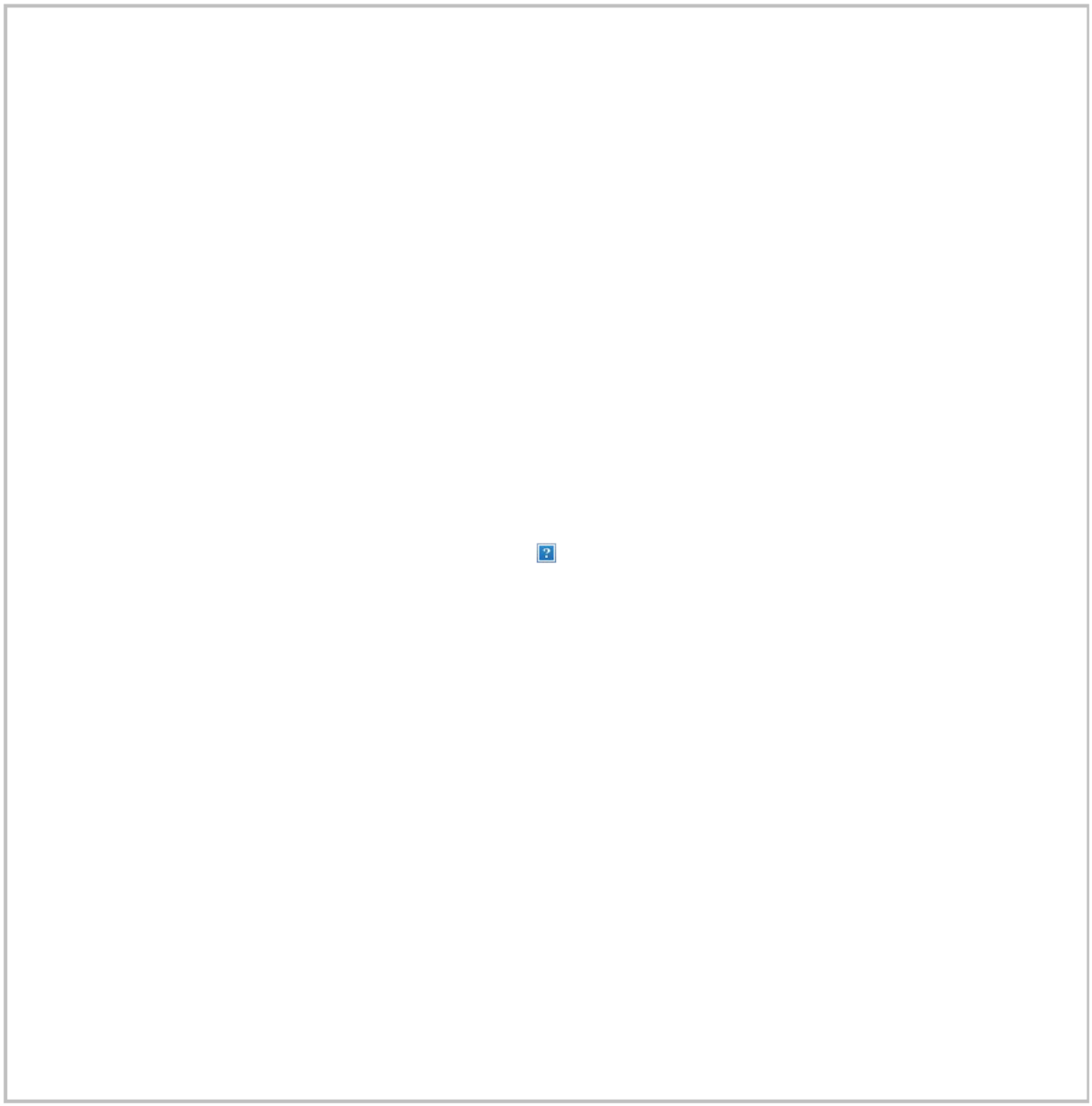
As we note there are increasing concerns for online safety of children and the need for cyber related education within schools, I have had a look at a student issued device and observed what these devices have access to, and if any kind of policy enforcement exists on student issued devices. [redacted]

Observing the behaviour of student issued Chromebooks, I don't see any kind dedicated ICT infrastructure to support safe children online activity and learning, as it seems student issued devices connect directly online through a home wifi rather than transversing through any kind of VPN into the schools infrastructure where there should be firewalls, and proxy devices with AAA policy enforcement that is keeping our children safe online. As a parent we can educate our children around cyber threats and being cyber safe online, however apart from a dedicated home network (which most parents wouldn't have set up) there is no way to enforce this behaviour.

As an example, a quick browser test has shown student devices have access to many URL categories that would be blocked on federal government devices such as; social media, streaming, gaming, crypto, and much more (although not tested i would be certain a student device would have access to porn and other R18+ rated content).

A game which seems popular amongst school kids is a Roblox game which is also individually hosted called "Five Nights At Freddie's". Using Symantec Site Review, operated by Broadcom (a trusted vendor of web security infrastructure) has rated the site as a security risk and compromised site.

Could the school please advise what policies are in place for online safety, cybersecurity advice, cybersecurity education, AAA enforcement, and infrastructure that is being used to protect our children and your students online?



Please respond to this email, and escalate to your ICT team. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me on my details below.

[redacted]

Many thanks and kind regards

[redacted]

[DSST-71905] RE: Guidance Request – Acceptable Device Use During School Hours

Created: 21/May/26 Updated: 27/May/26 Resolved: 21/May/26

Status:	Done
Project:	DSST Service Centre
Components:	None
Affects versions:	None
Fix versions:	None

Type:	Emailed request	**Priority:**	P3 - Medium
Reporter:	DSST@act.gov.au	**Assignee:**	Jane Harrold (Inactive)
Resolution:	Resolved	**Votes:**	0
Labels:	None		
Remaining Estimate:	Not Specified		
Time Spent:	Not Specified		
Original estimate:	Not Specified		

Attachments:	winmail.dat
Request Type:	Emailed request
Request language:	English
Request participants:	None
Organizations:	None
Reportable:	Business as Usual
Reportable:	Business as Usual
Reportable:	Business as Usual
Data quantity:	e.g. big, small, lots, 50,00 records
Category (DSST):	DSST other business

Description

OFFICIAL

Hi Gerardo,

Thank you for your email.

We recognise that the current policy is out of date and has some limitations. We are actively updating it for these reasons. In reference to your enquiry we are currently aiming for the updated policy to have companion templates that are age appropriate for students.

We will forward your comments to the team performing the review.

Thanks and kind regards,
Jane Harrold | Team Leader - Digital Service Centre

[A close-up of a sign AI-generated content may be incorrect.]<https://forms.office.com/r/ZN4GNPhLcs>T: 02 620 77935/77594| E: jane.harrold@act.gov.au<jane.harrold@act.gov.au>
Digital Strategy, Services & Transformation | Education | ACT Government
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling ACT 2611 | GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601
www.act.gov.au/education-and-training<http://www.act.gov.au/education-and-training>

From: Macana, Gerardo <Gerardo.Macana@ed.act.edu.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 20 May 2026 3:11 PM
To: Digital Strategy Services and Transformation <DSST@act.gov.au>
Subject: Guidance Request – Acceptable Device Use During School Hours

Hi Team,

I've received the following question from our School Psychologist regarding acceptable device use during school hours and was hoping to get your thoughts/guidance on this matter.

I explained that Section 2 of the COMMUNITIES ONLINE: ACCEPTABLE USE OF ICT – PARENTS AND STUDENTS GUIDELINES covers acceptable use and student responsibilities and also noted that students regularly find new ways to bypass filtering systems while we continue working on blocking these methods.

Please see the original message below for full context:

"Hi Gerardo,

Thanks for sending this through. I would like to be easily able to explain acceptable device use to students I work with so it would be helpful for me to know what they have agreed to.

It seems to be difficult to determine what is and is not "acceptable use" for students. This is particularly for students who are neurodiverse or low IQ who benefit from clear explicit instruction. It appears to me that the Chromebook Acceptance Form for parents' states that outside of school hours parents are "responsible for my child's use of the Chromebook outside regular school hours, including supervision and ensuring healthy, safe and acceptable use." Yet during school hours we are relying on "the Territory's filtering software reduces the risk of accidental access to inappropriate online content."

I am curious if a student is accessing a first-person shooter game online during school hours is there a clear statement, somewhere, that we could show students to remind them that this is not appropriate device use?

Thanks for your thoughts. "

Regards,

[cid:image007.jpg@01DCE919.A16BC100]
Gerardo Macana
IT Officer
Melrose High School
Marr St Pearce
Canberra ACT 2607
Ph: (02) 6142 0700
www.melrosehs.act.edu.au<http://www.melrosehs.act.edu.au/>
www.facebook.com/MelroseHSCanberra<http://www.facebook.com/MelroseHSCanberra>
[cid:image008.png@01DCE919.A16BC100]<http://www.facebook.com/MelroseHSCanberra>
[cid:image009.png@01DCE919.A16BC100] <https://twitter.com/MelroseHigh>
[cid:image010.jpg@01DCE919.A16BC100]
<https://www.instagram.com/melrosehscanberra/>

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Comments

Comment by DSST@act.gov.au [21/May/26]
winmail.dat ~~*(109 kB)*~~
Comment by Jane Harrold (Inactive) [27/May/26]
Sent to Skye at Ken's request

Generated at Thu Sep 10 03:08:54 UTC 2026 by Paola Abroguena using Jira 1001.0.0-SNAPSHOT#100294-rev:a6463b4310f8edea4a3ed2cd4456191feecfb832.