INDEPENDENT
EDUCATION UNION
VICTORIA TASMANIA

POLICY ON STAFF ICT RESOURCES USE IN SCHOOLS

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to assist the members of the IEU, and schools in general, to develop and implement effective, clear and fair policies, protocols and practices around the use of the school's Information Communication Technology (ICT) resources, including email and internet use, associated with their employment in schools.

1.2 It is important that schools develop and take specific steps to implement policies to ensure that there are commonly understood protocols and practices operating at all levels of the organisation and by all staff. These protocols and practises need to ensure that the school's network facilities /ICT resources are:

- used appropriately and lawfully; and
- that both employer and employees are afforded maximum protection from problems such as error, fraud, defamation, sabotage, extortion, breach of copyright, harassment, unlawful discrimination, accessing of inappropriate websites, privacy violations, illegal activity, service interruption, and from concerns or accusations about inappropriate staff/student communication.

1.3 The IEU believes that a balance between the rights of individuals and the rights of the workplace needs to be achieved. It is reasonable to have a general principle that the use of the school's ICT resources should be for work related purposes, but limited non-work related use should also be acceptable.

2. School Provision of ICT Resources

2.1 Where a school requires work to be done using ICT, the school should provide access to the equipment, network and other resources without cost to the employee. The school should also meet the costs of all equipment maintenance, repairs and replacement.

3. Development and Implementation of a School ICT Resources Use Policy

3.1 The Development of a School Policy

In developing a school policy about its ICT Resources Use, the following aspects should be included.

3.1.1 **Consultation** – All staff should be consulted when developing an ICT Resources Use policy. This should include:

- involvement at the development stage;
- staff endorsement of the draft policy.

3.1.2 **Content** - The school's policy should be constructed from a broad framework that defines work related use, gives scope for limited non-work related use, and clearly explains the level of monitoring that may be acceptable. The policy should not use definitions that are ambiguous and subjective in interpretation, and needs to be broad and flexible enough to be workable.

3.1.3 **Scope of the policy** – The school's policy should make clear the types of use of the school's ICT resources (regardless of work location) that come under its scope, for example:

- publishing and browsing the internet;
- downloading or accessing files from the internet or other electronic sources;
- email;
- electronic bulletins/noticeboards;
- social media;
- social networking;
- file transfer;
- file storage;
- file sharing;
- copying, saving or distributing files;
- Weblogs;
- videoconferencing;
- streaming media;
- instant messaging;
- online discussion groups and other 'chat' facilities;
- subscriptions to list servers, mailing lists or other like services;
- viewing material electronically;
- printing material.

3.1.4 **Key Aspects of the School Policy –** The school's policy should include clear statements which deal with the following aspects:

(i) ***Work related use***
Work related use of ICT resources includes (and is not limited to) the following:

- curriculum related information and resources;
- student welfare and pastoral issues;
- professional and educational issues;
- inter-school and external communication with work colleagues; and
- employment related information – for example, Occupational Health and Safety and union information.

(ii) ***Limited non-work related use***
The school's policy should not prohibit staff from the capacity for limited personal use of the school's ICT resources such as emailing and use of the internet. It is reasonable to require general adherence to work related business, but unreasonable to restrict staff from any personal

use. The policy should make clear that generally, limited use is acceptable provided it does not interfere with the person's employment obligations. In the implementation of the policy staff should discuss with management what is meant by excessive or unreasonable use.

(iii) ***Conditions for appropriate work and non-work related use***

The policy should make clear the conditions that both work and non-work related use of a school's ICT resources are subject to, for example:

- such use is not detrimental to job responsibilities;
- email sent is lawful and does not include defamatory or libellous statements;
- email shall not be used as a means of sexual or other forms of harassment;
- email shall not be used for sending offensive comments based on an individual's gender, age, sexuality, race, disability, or appearance;
- employees do not knowingly access, download, store, create, send or print files, messages or images from websites with pornographic materials or those which promote or encourage racism or intolerance;
- employees do not disclose another staff member's or a student's personal and/or confidential information unless lawful, and it is deemed relevant and appropriate, and/ or authorised.

(iv) ***Illegal use and material***

The school's policy and subsequent staff training should make clear that the school's ICT resources should not be used in any manner contrary to law or likely to contravene the law. Certain inappropriate or unauthorised use may constitute a criminal offence.

(v) ***Offensive or inappropriate material***

The school's policy and subsequent staff training should make explicit that the school's ICT resources should not be used for material that is pornographic, harassing, hateful, racist, sexist, abusive, obscene, discriminatory, offensive or threatening. This includes sexually-orientated messages or images and messages that could constitute sexual harassment.

(vi) ***Collection, access and monitoring of employee's personal information***

The school's policy should include details of what information is collected, and how information is collected, stored and monitored in accordance with this policy Section 3 – Fair handling of / Access to personal Information.

(vii) ***Non-compliance/breaches of policy***

Breach of the above conditions of use may constitute unacceptable use. However, any sanctions that may be applied in respect to inappropriate use should be discussed in the development of the school policy, and be proportionate and appropriate to the level of seriousness of the unacceptable use.

(viii) ***Complaints procedure***

The policy should make clear the steps involved in staff being able to make a complaint to management about any issues associated with the policy. This should include the particular management personnel responsible for handling complaints and a statement that complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner.

3.2 Implementation of the School's Policy and Protocols - awareness and training

3.2.1 Awareness

The school is responsible for ensuring that all persons to whom the policy applies are:

- aware of the policy and associated protocols;
- have easy access to it;
- have reminders of the need for compliance; and
- are provided with updates or developments of the policy.

The IEU believes that a school should not collect user contracts or signed agreements from staff. Staff do not generally sign other policy documents in schools – ICT resources use policies are no exception to this general rule.

3.2.2 Training

Importantly, all persons to whom the policy applies should be trained in all aspects of its interpretation and application to them. Management should ensure that staff are familiar with anti-discrimination, equal opportunity and anti-harassment laws, and the school's policies and or expectations in these areas.

3.3 Regular Review of the School's Policy and Procedures

The school should undertake a review of the policy and procedures every two years to ensure that it is updated where relevant with advances in ICT, changes to legislation, and proposed changes in procedures at the school level.

4. Fair Handing of/Access to and Storing of Personal Information

School policies and associated protocols should be very clear about the collecting of an individual employee's personal information and the monitoring of their ICT resources usage (for school and system purposes). The school procedures should be consistent and comply with the Australian Privacy Principles.

Where a school collects information, it should ensure that the subject of this has been made aware of and consented to such collection. An organisation should not collect information about an employee without their consent and only do so if there is a reasonable suspicion that the employee is breaching school policy.

The IEU sees the following key aspects as the minimum that schools need to undertake to meet the principles and ensure fair and transparent practices.

4.1 The Collection of Personal Information

4.1.1 Schools/systems need to have a Personal Information Policy or Statement that contains specific information, including the kinds of personal information it collects, for what purpose, how an individual may complain about a breach, and it must make the policy easily accessible;

4.1.2 Schools/systems should only collect and monitor personal information necessary for legitimate functions or activities of the organisation;

4.1.3 Collection of information should be done by lawful and fair means and not in an unreasonably intrusive way;

4.1.4 Reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that employees are aware of the purpose of such information and to whom else such information is disclosed. Employees should have access to this information. The school/system must respond to requests for access within a reasonable timeframe and give access in the manner requested, if it is reasonable to do so;

4.1.5 If the employee has not consented, disclosure of such information to other bodies, such as a Catholic Education Office, should only be made for the purposes for which the information was collected, and if there is a serious breach suspected or serious threat to the organisation.

4.2 The Accessing and Monitoring and Storing of Personal Information

4.2.1 If the school has determined to monitor information about individual staff via their *ICT* use, there should be explicit information provided to staff about:

- the type and purpose of such collection;
- how they will collect, hold, use and disclose such information
- and which staff members are Authorised Persons for collecting and monitoring the information, and who has access to this information. Authorised Persons should only be accessing or monitoring the records of the school's ICT resources for valid operational, maintenance, compliance, auditing, legal, and security or investigation purposes where there is a valid suspicion of a serious breach of the policy.

4.2.2 The school/system should make an individual aware, at the time or as soon as is practicable after, the organisation collects their personal information.

4.2.3 The school/system must take all reasonable steps to protect the personal information it holds from interference, misuse and loss, unauthorised access, modification and disclosure.

5. Related Policy Areas

5.1 School/system policies and procedures and staff training opportunities should also address a number of other areas related to ICT resources use:

- **Workloads** – clear statements about reasonable workloads associated with responding to student and parent emailing

- **Student use** – clear statements and protocols about appropriate student ICT use

- **Removal of Content -** Procedures for the timely removal of inappropriate content about a staff member or student from websites or social media sites

- **Staff/student communication**– clear guidelines and protocols for staff and students around electronic communication such as Facebook and email etc.

- **Complaints procedures -** for staff and management in relation to the policy