



# Mallacoota P12 eLearning – Bridging the Gap

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**Mallacoota P12 College** uses the Internet as a teaching and learning tool. We see the Internet as a valuable resource, but acknowledge it must be used responsibly.

Your child has been asked to agree to use the Internet responsibly at school. Parents should be aware that the nature of the Internet means that full protection from inappropriate content can never be guaranteed.

At Mallacoota P12 College we:

- provide a filtered service
- provide supervision and direction in Internet activities
- work towards setting tasks that ask students open questions, so they can't copy and paste all answers from the Internet
- reinforce the importance of safe and respectful use of the Internet in all curriculum areas
- may allow student access to social networking sites for educational purpose – this will be under teacher direction

## Bridging the gap between home and school

At school the Internet is mostly used to support teaching and learning. At home, however, it is often used differently. Not only is it a study resource for students, but it is increasingly being used as a social space.

If you have the Internet at home, encourage your child to show you what they are doing online.

At home we recommend you:

- find out how your child uses the Internet and who else is involved in any online activities
- have the computer with Internet access in a shared place in the house – not your child's bedroom
- ask questions when your child shows you what they are doing, such as:
  - how does it work and how do you set it up?
  - who is else is sharing this space or game? (do you know them or did you "meet" them online?)
  - can you see any risks or dangers in the activity - what would you say to warn/inform a younger child?
  - what are you doing to protect yourself or your friends from these potential dangers?
  - when would you inform an adult about an incident that has happened online that concerns you? Discuss why your child might keep it to themselves.

Typically students will not approach an adult for help because:

- they might get the blame for any incident
- they don't think adults "get" their online stuff
- they might put at risk their own access to technology by either:
  - admitting to a mistake, or
  - highlighting a situation that might lead a parent to ban their access.



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## What has your child agreed to and why?

### Protecting personal privacy rights and those of other students

Students like to publish information about themselves and their friends in spaces like Facebook, blogs etc. but in doing so they can make themselves more vulnerable to being approached, groomed or bullied online. To avoid this we recommend they:

- **don't use their own name**, but develop an online name and use avatars.
- **don't share personal** details including images of themselves or their friends online.
- **password protect** any spaces or accounts.
- **don't allow anyone they don't know to join their chat or collaborative space.**
- are reminded that any image or comment they put on the Internet is now **public** (anyone can see, change or use it) so **no full names** should appear in reference to individuals in any image, movie or sound recording.

### Using the Internet in line with school's student code of conduct

Using appropriate language when talking to and working with others online and never write or participate in hate mail.

Being online can make students feel that they are anonymous and sometimes students may say things online that they would never say to someone's face. Often very few adults visit this online environment. The web space or online chat environment that they use in leisure time might also have explicit language and they may feel they have to be part of it.

### Using equipment and resources properly for educational purposes as directed by teachers

It is important to realise that there is a time for fun and a time for work even on the Internet. Students may often see the Internet as "free" but aimless surfing on the net incurs a download cost, takes up bandwidth and wastes time. By just taking care with the equipment, and thinking carefully about printing and downloading from the Internet students can save time, money and the environment.

### Using social networking sites for educational purposes and only as directed by teachers

Web 2.0 tools and social networking spaces allow students to be contributors to the web and allow them to work collaboratively online with other students. Creating or contributing to blogs, wikis, digital stories and podcasts can all be legitimate educational activities which allow students to publish, share and inform others and be active contributors to the web.

The task, online space and responsibilities should be clearly outlined by the school and reinforced throughout the task.

The educational purpose should be clearly understood by the student and the online space defined by the school. When publishing students should be aware that they are posting to the web and should follow safe practices which protect both their privacy and other members of the school community and post/create in an appropriate way for the school project.

### Keeping away from rude or offensive sites.

In school settings, Internet Service Providers set up filters to block inappropriate content, but these filters are not foolproof. **Students who deliberately seek out inappropriate content or use technology that bypasses filters, will have their Internet access reviewed and their parents will be informed.**

### Following copyright procedures

All music, information, images and games on the Internet are owned by someone. A term called copyright is a legal one and has laws to enforce it. Free download may risk bringing a virus or spyware to the computer or system. These can destroy a computer system or provide

