



Digital Inclusion for 21st Century Learners

Connected and Engaged



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of this land, and we pay respect to Elders past and present, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hope of First Nations people in Tasmania.

Foreword

Every learner should have the opportunity to be connected and engaged in learning, supported through access to and use of technology. Our goal is to ensure all learners have the technological skills, with equitable access to safe online environments to pursue life opportunities in the 21st century.

Access to the online world is a material basic that every individual has a right to. The *Department's Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy*¹ outlines how we support our learners to engage with their learning environment. We recognise that this includes ensuring all our learners are digitally literate and skilled.

Participation in online learning environments is an important factor in engaging students in their learning. In-line with *Our Approach to Student Engagement* we know that online participation and collaboration occurs best when students have access to safe, quality online teaching environments along with the appropriate digital resources and technology.

The Department has improved its average student to device ratio to 1.6 students per computer. This has been supported in the past three years with individual student devices for students learning in Year 11 and 12 extension schools as well as the availability of internet hotspots. With the NBN rollout complete in Tasmania, bandwidth has continued to be upgraded at Department locations, including schools and public libraries, as it becomes available to support increased digital access. The Department has implemented various digital toolsets to support learning and continues to develop the digital skills of the workforce to maximise their use in learning delivery.

In recognising our progress, we acknowledge there is still more to do. During the COVID-19 pandemic it was highlighted that access to online learning may not be available to all families. During this time digital inclusion became a focus for schools as they pivoted to remote learning. Schools made devices available for students to take home, a central pool of internet hotspots were provided for schools to distribute on request, and digital content was sourced and created.

We want to build on the experience of the last two years and continue to improve access to online learning opportunities both in class and outside of the school gate. A first step in supporting this is demonstrated in our commitment to invest \$3 million over three years to provide school libraries with computers and internet hotspots to loan to our students to take home and \$2 million to help families and carers support their child's digital access.

The Department's vision and focus supports the Tasmanian Government's strategy for digital transformation, *Our Digital Future*². Through aligning our objectives to the Tasmanian Government's strategy, we can contribute to the overall aim of ensuring that people are afforded equitable access to the tools and skills necessary for them to successfully navigate the internet and participate freely and safely in a digitally inclusive environment.

Tim Bullard
Secretary



Access to the online world is a material basic that every child and young person has a right to.

Digital Inclusion for 21st Century Learners Framework

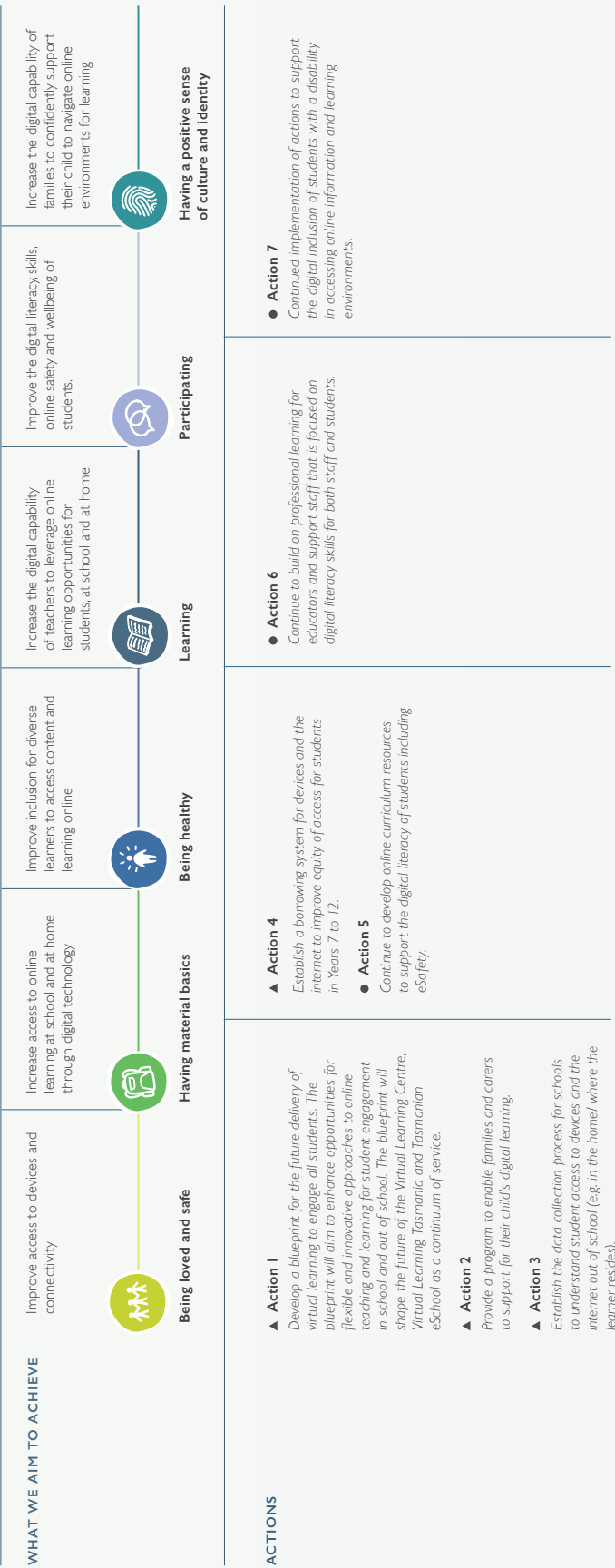
CONNECTED AND ENGAGED

OUR GOAL

To ensure all learners have the technological skills, with equitable access to safe online environments to pursue life opportunities in the 21st century

WHAT GUIDES US

- 2022 – 2024 Department of Education Strategic Plan
- Wellbeing for Learning: Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy
- Approach to Student Engagement
- Our Digital Future: The Tasmanian Government strategy for digital transformation 2020



KEY

- Existing action
- ▲ New action



Data snapshot

55,839

students across

195

Government schools ³

780

students in remote
and very
remote areas ⁴

An average of
1.6 students
per device

Over
37,500

computers

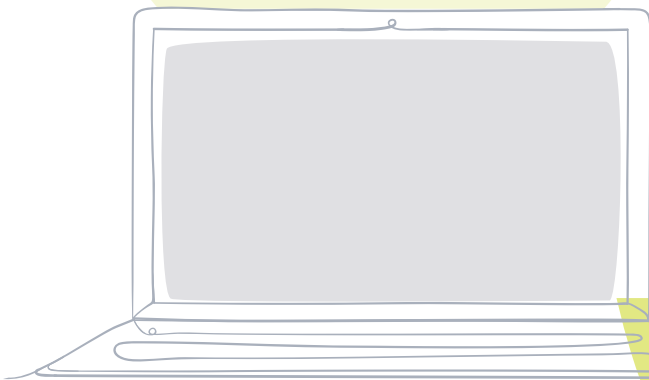
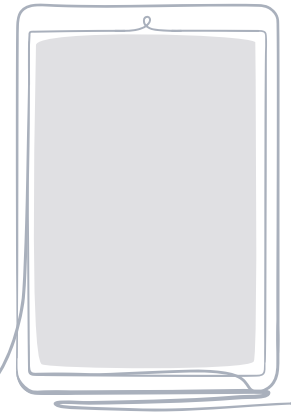
in schools for direct
student access

153 students

supported with
additional specialised
technology

Over
6,500
computers

loaned in 2020
to support remote learning
during the COVID-19
pandemic





Our vision

We continue to face an environment of rapid technological change. Education has surpassed the four walls of the classroom to encompass a learning environment that removes restriction on time and place, allowing students to engage in their education in more flexible and customised ways.

We will aspire to ensure every learner has the opportunity to be connected and engaged in learning, supported through access to and use of technology. Our goal is to ensure all learners have the technological skills, with equitable access to safe online environments to pursue life opportunities in the 21st century. In doing so our learners will experience higher levels of digital inclusion, improved digital skills and greater access to engaging online learning environments.

Having access to the online world is increasingly seen as a material basic that every individual has a right to. It is from this view that we are working to ensure every learner is connected and engaged in learning through access to and use of technology.

This means expanding our access to devices and the internet when learning from home through our device borrowing scheme. It also means supporting our families to develop the digital skills and confidence to navigate online environments to support their child's learning.

We recognise that improving equity of access does not only mean ensuring all our learners have access to a device and the internet, but that they also have access to the same online learning opportunities through a skilled and agile workforce that can deliver rich online learning experiences.

To do this we will continue to build on professional learning for educators and support staff that is focused on digital literacy skills for both staff and students. We must ensure that our workforce is equally capable of navigating online learning environments, creating and sourcing engaging digital content, and using common applications. We must also ensure our workforce can teach the knowledge and skills outlined in the *Digital Literacy General Capability*⁵ to provide our learners with the digital skills and confidence to reach their full potential.

What we will do

Our approach to digital inclusion puts the child at the centre, recognising that our learners have a right to equitable access to technology. It recognises that they also have a right to access a skilled workforce that can deliver digital learning opportunities to develop their technological capabilities. To achieve our vision, we will:

- Improve access to devices and connectivity.
- Increase access to online learning at school and at home through digital technology.
- Improve inclusion for diverse learners to access content and learning online.
- Increase the digital capability of teachers to leverage online learning opportunities for students, at school and at home.
- Improve the digital literacy, skills and online safety and wellbeing of students.
- Increase the digital capability of families to confidently support their child to navigate online environments for learning.



▲ Action I

Key ▲ new action ● ongoing action

Develop a blueprint for the future delivery of virtual learning to engage all students.

The blueprint will aim to enhance opportunities for flexible and innovative approaches to online teaching and learning for student engagement in school and out of school.

The blueprint will shape the future of the Virtual Learning Centre, Virtual Learning Tasmania and Tasmanian e-School as a continuum of service.

Authorising Agent: Deputy Secretary Portfolio Services for Development and Support

Led by: Years 9-12 Learning

Supported by: Inclusion and Diversity Services, Teaching and Learning, Tasmanian eSchool & Years 11 and 12

What we will do:

We will develop a blueprint that enhances opportunities for learners to use technology to engage in learning on a continuum from using devices in classrooms through to full online provision.

Within this range of service provision, we will seek to understand the opportunities available to best meet learner needs, including:

- Establishing a minimum requirement for online provision for all schools.
- Using blended learning approaches within classroom settings across all schools.
- Enriching education experiences through quality online teaching and learning for all students.
- Using technology and online environments to engage diverse learners.
- Exploring flexible and agile enrolment for learners.
- Providing flexible and innovative approaches to curriculum provision.

To develop the blueprint we will:

- Analyse and capture feedback on current online opportunities for learners.
- Understand online learning provision across all schools to ensure equity for all learners.
- Complete a jurisdictional scan of flexible and online learning provision (other sectors, nationally and internationally).
- Analyse outputs of other key actions.
- Consult with all key stakeholders to identify needs, issues and barriers (students, teachers, schools, parents/carers, divisional business units).

What this means across our system

Schools:

- Will review current approaches to online provision and plan for future delivery in-line with minimum standards.
- Will have the opportunity to provide input into the development of the blueprint.
- Will be able to provide feedback on their current approaches to online resources and possible areas for improvement.

Divisional business units:

- Teaching and Learning, Years 9-12 Learning, and Tasmanian eSchool (with support from Inclusion and Diversity Services) will lead the development of the blueprint.
- Other business units will be consulted to inform outputs and implementation of the blueprint.
- Consideration will be given to include the commitment to digital inclusion in the Approach to School Improvement.

How we measure impact:

- We will report on whether the blueprint clearly articulates outputs, objectives and measurable key indicators.
- We will report on whether the blueprint is developed with input from key stakeholders.

▲ Action 2

Provide a program to enable families and carers to support their child's digital learning.

Authorising Agent: Office of the Secretary

Led by: Libraries Tasmania

Supported by: Child and Student Wellbeing and Information Technology Services

What we will do:

We will invest \$2 million in a layered program, communicating information and delivering guidance to all parents and carers, with a targeted approach for families with the greatest need. The purpose will be to facilitate a deeper understanding of how schools are engaging with online learning, provide insights into cybersafety and media literacy, and give practical help to families with lower digital access and capability to increase equity for students.

What this means across our system

Schools:

- Will act as a communication channel reaching all families.
- Can identify those families that may require a more targeted approach.
- May provide facilities for program delivery.

Libraries:

- Will be responsible for engaging with not-for-profit community partners to establish a funded program delivery network.
- Will use its expertise to leverage off the success of established digital literacy programs.
- Will manage the development and delivery of information, provide guidance and focused activities.
- Will provide access to computers and learning spaces in public libraries to supplement school premises as required.
- Will engage with families accessing Early Learning services such as Child and Family Learning Centres.

Divisional business units:

- Will provide Libraries Tasmania with detailed information about virtual learning in schools to inform the content development and program delivery.
- Will determine key outcomes and evaluation measures.
- Will monitor the impact of the program and provide recommendations.

How we measure impact:

- We will report on the number of families engaged with the program.
- We will report on the impact of the program including level of confidence in engaging with online content, perceived skill level and usefulness for supporting student learning.

We will provide \$2 million in funding to enable families and carers to confidently support their child's online learning.

▲ Action 3

Establish the data collection process for schools to understand student access to devices and the internet out of school (e.g. in the home/ where the learner resides).

Authorising Agent: Deputy Secretary Portfolio Services for Business Operations and Support Services & Deputy Secretary Portfolio Services for Continuous Improvement and Evaluation

Led by: Information Technology Services & Education Performance and Review

What we will do:

We will collect family data about student access to a device and the internet at home to allow more targeted distribution of devices and internet hotspots to students and families. Questions collected in the Student Enrolment and annual Student Validation forms will include:

- Does this student have access to a device for school work?
- Does this device connect to the internet using the NBN?
- Does this device connect to the internet from a mobile phone?
- Is the device shared by others which could cause access issues that will impact the student's education?

What this means across our system

Schools:

- Can use this data to understand levels of student need.
- Can use this data to identify students who may require access to a device or the internet when learning from home is required.

Divisional business units:

- Will ensure this data is reviewed to identify areas where there may be higher levels of inequity.
- Will be responsible for ensuring this data is used when determining allocation of devices and the internet for use at home through borrowing systems (Action 4).

How we measure impact:

- We will report on the accuracy and use of data to provide targeted services to students and families at the system level including allocation of devices and internet hotspots through take-home borrowing system (Action 4).



▲ Action 4

Establish a borrowing system for devices and the internet to improve equity of access for students in Years 7 to 12.

Authorised by: Deputy Secretary Portfolio Services for Business Operations and Support Services & Deputy Secretary Portfolio Services for Development and Support

Led by: Information Technology Services & Child and Student Wellbeing

What we will do

We will work towards reducing barriers to accessing technology by providing devices and internet hotspots to students in Years 7 to 12 through a take home borrowing system. This will support students who would otherwise not have access to a computer or the internet to engage with their learning off-site. This action will support the capacity of the Department to provide virtual learning experiences and support the development of our learner's digital literacy skills.

What this means across our system

Schools:

- Will be responsible for maintaining the fleet of devices and internet hotspots.
- Will be able to loan out devices and internet hotspots.
- Will be required to follow direction on ensuring students can access devices and internet hotspots for off-site use.
- May be asked to provide loan data to their local IT consultant.

Divisional business units:

- Will identify eligible schools and deploy devices and internet hotspots.
- Will provide clear direction on ensuring equitable access to devices and the internet for students learning off-site.
- Will provide guidance on ensuring equitable access to devices and the internet for students learning off-site.
- Will monitor and respond to early data regarding uptake of borrowing system and any barriers that need to be addressed.
- Will monitor and respond to student experience surveys regarding use of devices and perceived impact on learning.

How we measure impact:

- We will report on the number of devices loaned per year.
- We will report on student experience surveys regarding use of the borrowing system and impact on learning.
- We will report on school staff experience of the loaning system.

We will provide \$3 million over three years to support school libraries loan out computers and internet hotspots to students in Years 7 to 12.

• Action 5

Continue to develop online curriculum resources to support the digital literacy of students including eSafety.

Authorising Agent: Deputy Secretary Portfolio Services for Development and Support

Led by: Teaching and Learning

Supported by: Inclusion and Diversity & Years 9-12 Learning

What we will do:

We will continue to develop and deliver online curriculum resources to support the digital literacy of students. We will do this by aligning resources to the *Australian Curriculum Digital Literacy Continuum (Version 9)*⁶ and Department of Education, Skills and Employment *Digital Literacy Skills Framework*⁷ as appropriate.

We will support the digital safety and wellbeing of our students by developing and communicating a catalogue of approved digital tools and delivery of online courses to unpack eSafety requirements based on the eSafety Commissioners' resources. We will also continue to promote resources currently available, including:

- *Online safety parent fact sheet*
- *Cyber Safety Resources*
- *ACARA Cybersafety at home*
- *Cybermarvel*

We will provide a Level 1 Digital Literacy course in 2023 and Level 2 Essential Skills Digital Literacy course in 2024 for Years 11–12.

What this means across our system

Schools:

- Can use the digital curriculum resources developed by Teaching and Learning to support their student's digital literacy skills.
- Will be responsible for ensuring they are providing safe online learning environments for their students through approved applications and platforms.
- Can promote and engage with eSafety resources to ensure students develop the appropriate skills and understanding to manage their digital safety and wellbeing.

Divisional business units:

- Will map eSafety resources to the Digital Literacy Continuum.
- Will update the Department's website to include relevant year-level appropriate resources.
- Will provide communication to schools and libraries to highlight available quality resources.

How we measure impact:

- We will report on website traffic analytics.
- We will report on distribution of current resources.
- We will report on participation in online courses.

• Action 6

Continue to build on professional learning for educators and support staff that is focused on digital literacy skills for both staff and students.

Authorising Agent: Deputy Secretary Portfolio Services for Development and Support

Led by: Teaching and Learning

Supported by: Information Technology Services, Years 9-12 Learning & People Capability and Development

What we will do:

We will continue to improve the digital capabilities of our teachers and support staff through professional learning and development. We will do this by:

- Providing professional learning for online pedagogy to enhance quality teaching through use of technology.
- Providing professional learning and support for Digital Literacy Leaders in schools to improve the digital capacity of staff in schools.
- Providing online courses on how to use the Department's online learning platform (Canvas).
- Providing Microsoft suite professional learning.
- Delivering professional learning on how to implement the *Australian Curriculum's Technologies and Digital Literacy Continuum (Version 9)*.⁸
- Providing professional learning on senior secondary digital literacy focused courses.
- Engaging with the Tasmanian Society for Information Technology Education (TASITE) to identify professional learning opportunities.
- Providing ongoing professional learning for users of Department provided devices.
- Increasing awareness of the *Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Professional Standard 4.5* to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) safely, responsibly, and ethically.

What this means across our system

Schools:

- Teachers will be responsible for embedding the *Digital Literacy Continuum (Version 9)*.⁹
- School leadership will be responsible for encouraging staff participation in digital literacy professional learning opportunities when they become available.

Divisional business units:

- Teaching and Learning will be responsible for the development and delivery of professional learning to unpack the Technologies, *Digital Literacy Continuum* and TASC focused digital literacy courses communicated through the Professional Learning Institute.

How we measure impact:

- We will report on the number of professional learning courses delivered and rates of participation and completion.
- We will report on Australian Curriculum Digital Technologies.

• Action 7

Continue to implement actions to support the digital inclusion of students with a disability in accessing online information and learning environments.

Authorising Agent: Deputy Secretary Portfolio Services for Development and Support

Led by: Inclusion and Diversity Services

Supported by: Years 9-12 Learning, Teaching and Learning & Strategic Marketing, Communications and Media

What we will do:

We will continue to implement the *Digital Information Accessibility Action Plan* to deliver inclusive, high quality digital information to our learners and their families. High quality and inclusive digital information considers the diverse and unique needs of all individuals.

Through the continued implementation of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) Grants program we will work to improve the digital inclusion of our learners by providing additional access to specialised devices and software for students with disability.

What this means across our system

Schools:

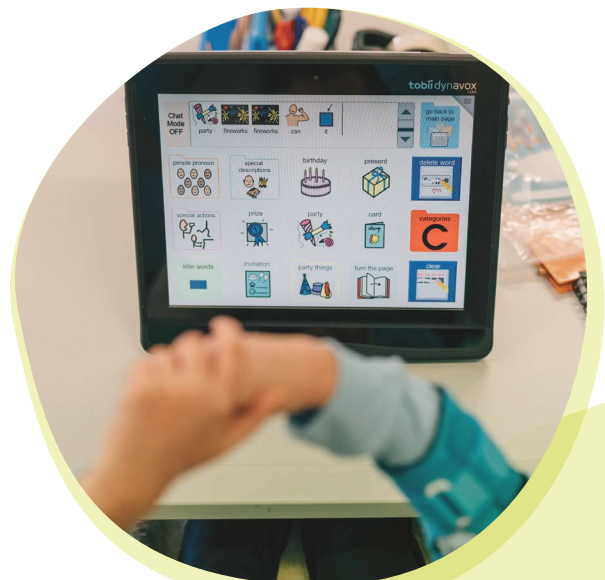
- Will be responsible for considering the accessibility of their online content in-line with the *Digital Information Accessibility Action Plan*.
- Will be responsible for considering the digital needs of students with a disability including access to specialised devices and software.

Divisional business units:

- Strategic Marketing, Communications and Media will implement, monitor and report on relevant actions in the *Digital Information Accessibility Plan*.
- Inclusion and Access Coordinators will continue to implement the ICT Grants program to provide additional access to specialised devices and software/peripherals for students with a disability.
- Inclusion and Access Coordinators will also provide specialist professional learning for the use of assistive technologies, software and peripherals.

How we measure impact:

- We will report on compliance of Departmental managed websites (non-school) with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (2.1 AA guidelines).
- We will report on the number of students supported through the ICT grants program.







Ways of engaging with the actions in your learning environment

- Use enrolment data outlining which families may have limited access to devices and the internet at home and consider additional supports including loaning of devices and internet hotspots.
- Consider the technological capabilities of staff and identify professional learning for relevant staff.
- Explore opportunities for students to engage with virtual learning including in class and at home.
- Consider families that may require digital literacy support and how they may be assisted to engage with the school and their child's learning.
- Consider accessibility of online content for learners with diverse needs.
- Consider the actions and available data (e.g. enrolment data on access to devices) in School Improvement Planning to increase digital inclusion within the school context.

Monitoring and reporting

The Child and Student Wellbeing Unit, along with Information Technology Services will monitor the implementation of the actions and will work collaboratively with schools and relevant business units.

Progress against the actions will be reported to the Department's Executive to ensure ongoing accountability. Opportunities to engage with students, staff, families and the broader community will continue to occur over the life of the actions.

Our work under the actions will continue to support and be informed by the work of other jurisdictions and national efforts. We will report on our work at relevant state-wide forums to continue to advocate for equity of access to technology for our learners and their families. We will continue to monitor the ever evolving digital landscape to ensure our work reflects contemporary best practice.

By design each action has its own identified data to measure impact. It is the responsibility of each lead to monitor this data and provide updates to the Executive through Child and Student Wellbeing and Information Technology Services every six months. Measurement will be used to inform future direction and need.

For further information or engagement with the actions, contact the Child and Student Wellbeing Unit email: wellbeing.unit@education.tas.gov.au



Key terms and references

Key Terms

Digital inclusion

Digital inclusion refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).¹⁰

Digital literacy

Digital literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to create, manage, communicate and investigate data, information and ideas, and solve problems. It assists students to work collaboratively at school and in their lives beyond school.

Digital literacy involves students critically identifying and appropriately selecting and using digital devices or systems, and learning to make the most of the technologies available to them. Students adapt to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve, and protect the safety of themselves and others in digital environments.¹¹

Virtual learning

Virtual learning uses computer software, the internet or both to deliver online instruction to students. Virtual learning can take place in a self-paced environment or in a real-time environment.¹²

Blended learning

Blended learning combines online resources with traditional pedagogies and practices. Learners may be in a face-to-face classroom with their teacher or they may be at another location accessing learning materials online or taking part in a live online lesson. The extent to which a program is blended changes depending on the needs of the learners or the program.¹³

eSafety

eSafety refers to online users protecting themselves and others from harms and risks which may jeopardise their personal information, lead to unsafe communications or affect their mental health and wellbeing.¹⁴



Action snapshot

Action	Description
Action 1	Develop a blueprint for the future delivery of virtual learning to engage all students. The blueprint will aim to enhance opportunities for flexible and innovative approaches to online teaching and learning for student engagement in school and out of school. The blueprint will shape the future of the Virtual Learning Centre, Virtual Learning Tasmania and Tasmanian eSchool as a continuum of service.
Action 2	Provide a program to enable families and carers to support their child's digital learning.
Action 3	Establish the data collection process for schools to understand student access to devices and the internet out of school (e.g. in the home/ where the learner resides).
Action 4	Establish a borrowing system for devices and the internet to improve equity of access for students in Years 7 to 12.
Action 5	Continue to develop online curriculum resources to support the digital literacy of students including eSafety.
Action 6	Continue to build on professional learning for educators and support staff that is focused on digital literacy skills for both staff and students.
Action 7	Continue to implement actions to support the digital inclusion of students with a disability in accessing online information and learning environments.

Approach to engagement

Element of Engagement

Digital Inclusion Output

Quality Teaching for Learning

Quality teaching involves the application of all five Key Teaching Practices outlined in the Pedagogical Framework and an integrated approach to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.



- Develop a blueprint for the future delivery of virtual learning to engage all students. The blueprint will aim to enhance opportunities for flexible and innovative approaches to online teaching and learning for student engagement in school and out of school
- Continue to develop online curriculum resources to support the digital literacy of students including eSafety
- Continue to build on professional learning for educators and support staff that is focused on digital literacy skills for both staff and students.

Belonging and Strong Relationships

Sense of belonging has to do with feelings of being accepted and valued by their peers, and by others at their school. Belonging acknowledges a young person's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities.



- Develop a blueprint for the future delivery of virtual learning to engage all students. The blueprint will aim to enhance opportunities for flexible and innovative approaches to online teaching and learning for student engagement in school and out of school.
- Provide a program to enable families and carers support their child's digital learning.

School Culture

Positive school culture includes schools working to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant, inclusive and that promotes intellectual rigour.



- Establish a borrowing system for devices and the internet to improve equity of access for students in Years 7-12.
- Establish the data collection process for schools to understand student access to devices and the internet out of school (e.g. in the home/ where the learner resides).
- Continued implementation of actions to support the digital inclusion of students with a disability in accessing online information and learning environments.

Student Voice and Agency

Empowering students to share their views to influence their learning and their learning environment.



- Develop a blueprint for the future delivery of virtual learning to engage all students. The blueprint will aim to enhance opportunities for flexible and innovative approaches to online teaching and learning for student engagement in school and out of school.

Approach to engagement

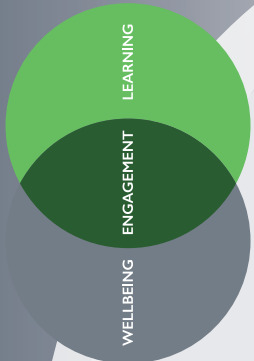
VERSION 1

Approach to Student Engagement

By focusing on belonging and strong relationships, school culture, quality teaching and student voice and agency we will be better equipped to engage students with their learning.

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Student Voice and Agency

Empowering students to share their views to influence their learning and their learning environment.



Learning



Valued, loved and safe



Having a positive sense of culture and identity



Having material basics



Being healthy



Participating

Department for Education, Children and Young People



Endnotes

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- 3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Table 35b Number of All Schools by States and Territories, Affiliation and School type, 2021. Viewed June 2022, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release>
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Other Resources

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