



## DIGITAL POLICY (Condensed Version)

### Rationale

Digital technology plays a vital role in modern education, offering powerful tools for learning, collaboration, and innovation. At Merryland International School, we aim to prepare students for a technology-driven world by integrating digital tools into our learning environment responsibly and safely.

While technology brings many benefits, it also introduces risks such as cyberbullying, data breaches, and exposure to inappropriate content. This policy establishes clear expectations and safeguards to protect students, staff, and families, while promoting responsible and respectful use of technology.

We align with ADEK guidelines, Federal laws—including Decree-Law No. 45 of 2021 on Personal Data Protection—and our school's core values. This ensures that all digital practices prioritize child safety, uphold individual rights, and support a positive, inclusive, and secure digital environment.

To achieve this, we:

- Define appropriate digital conduct for staff, students, and volunteers.
- Promote respectful and safe online behaviour.
- Support parents in protecting their children online.
- Develop and implement online safety agreements with students and families.
- Regularly review digital tools, platforms, and system security.
- Protect personal data and use images only with consent.
- Provide staff training and assess risks before adopting new technologies.

This policy empowers our school community to make the most of digital opportunities while staying protected online.

### 1. DIGITAL STRATEGY AND OVERSIGHT

Merryland International School's Digital Strategy provides a structured framework for leveraging technology to enhance student learning, support inclusive education, and improve administrative efficiency. This policy will be published on the school website to ensure transparency and accessibility.



Our digital approach focuses on:

- Enhancing teaching and learning through technology.
- Promoting inclusive practices by integrating assistive technologies, in line with the ADEK School Inclusion Policy.
- Developing student competencies in digital literacy, coding, communication, collaboration, and citizenship.
- Streamlining operations through data analytics and digital tools.

Infrastructure is strengthened through phased upgrades, high-speed internet, and modern hardware and software. Procurement is cost-effective, guided by a defined timeline and regular reviews. Security is prioritized through regular audits, advanced cybersecurity measures, and staff training. Future-readiness is ensured by adopting scalable systems and monitoring emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, through workshops and external partnerships.

Oversight is provided by the Merryland Digital Wellbeing Committee (MDWC), which is responsible for:

- Implementing and reviewing the digital strategy annually.
- Monitoring technology effectiveness, learning outcomes, cybersecurity, backups, and staff development needs.
- Updating policies and involving key stakeholders, including the Digital Officer, Head of IT, teachers, parents, and students.

A Digital Liaison Officer coordinates with ADEK on matters of digital competency, safety, and compliance. This role involves:

- Communicating policy updates and integration of standards into the curriculum.
- Organizing staff training.
- Maintaining documentation and preparing reports.

## 2. DIGITAL COMPETENCIES

We equip students with essential digital skills tailored to their developmental stages:

- Early Years (KG1-KG2): Basic device familiarity, internet uses, seeking adult help.
- Lower Primary (Grades 1-3): Basic computer skills, software use, internet safety.
- Upper Primary (Grades 4-6): Enhanced skills, research, ethical use.
- Lower Secondary (Grades 7-9): Intermediate skills, coding, collaboration.
- Upper Secondary (Grades 10-12): Advanced literacy, coding, ethics, cybersecurity.



Skills integrate into the curriculum via literacy activities, IT classes, and project-based learning, supported by equipped classrooms, assistive technologies per ADEK School Inclusion Policy, a digital resource center, staff training, rubrics-based assessments, and parental workshops.

Staff training enhances digital infrastructure and student outcomes through tailored programs:

- Provision: Role-specific training during onboarding and ongoing, with CPD.
- Topics: Infrastructure, outcomes, data protection, cybersecurity, safety.
- Implementation: Workshops, CPD Sessions, online courses, hands-on sessions, with materials on ORISON.

### 3. RESPONSIBLE USAGE AND DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING

Responsible Usage Policies:

- Students: Use school systems for education, adhere to behaviour and usage guidelines as per Federal Decree-Law No. 38 of 2021, limit personal use, avoid VPNs unless authorized, uphold academic honesty, protect credentials.
- Parents: Required to monitor home use, guide adherence, use approved channels, respect privacy, attend training workshops.
- Staff: Use systems professionally, maintain high privacy on personal social media, avoid school email for personal use, set strong passwords, secure data, refrain from student interactions (no friend requests or following students under 18).
- Visitors: Access networks with permission, follow rules.

Safeguarding Students:

- Awareness: Age-appropriate programs on benefits/risks (privacy, cyberbullying, scams, gambling, digital addiction), teaching self-assessment.
- Filtering/Monitoring: Block harmful content, analyze usage.
- Support: Identify at-risk students for counseling as per ADEK Student Mental Health and Behaviour Policies, use secure virtual platforms, align internet use with curriculum, provide parental resources.
- Response: Clear reporting/ response protocols, staff training.
- Digital Incidents: Inappropriate use (breaches, cyberbullying, etc.) is monitored. Reports go to the MDWC, with containment, investigation, support, discipline, and ADEK/Police reporting if required. Records are signed by the Principal and stored per ADEK School Records Policy.



#### 4. DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- BYOD: Devices meeting security standards (antivirus, encryption) are registered for educational use, with users adhering to policies.
- Staff Systems: Role-based access with secure credentials, and ADEK/ School provided LMS access, with training and logs.
- Assistive Technology: For students with IEPs/DLPs, assessed and integrated per ADEK School Inclusion Policy, with consent.
- External Providers: Assessed for compatibility, security, compliance

#### 5. DATA AND CYBERSECURITY

- Secure Architecture: Uses Multi-Factor Authentication, SonicWall firewalls, intrusion detection, web filtering, Kaspersky antivirus, unified security edge architecture etc. Acronis backups are stored offline, with a disaster recovery plan. Cloud systems sync data securely.
- Data Security: Classified, encrypted in transit/at rest, protected with loss prevention, and physically secured.
- Maintenance: Updates systems, tests performance, monitors logs.
- External Apps: Require IT approval, SSO, consent, training, monitoring.
- Virtual Interactions: Need parental consent, ADEK approval, secure platforms, teacher presence.
- Backups: Daily/weekly, encrypted, per ADEK School Records Policy.
- Cybersecurity Incidents: Managed by an Incident Response Team, reported only to ADEK and service providers per Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021, with recovery and review.

#### 6. DATA PROTECTION

Data is processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently, kept minimal, accurate, and secure, with consent. Contractors sign NDAs prohibiting data sharing without ADEK consent. Parents are informed of ADEK data-sharing obligations.

Data shared with ADEK is minimal, accurate, and secure, with records maintained. The Data Protection Plan is reviewed annually, aligning with Federal Decree-Law No. 45 of 2021 and ADEK School Records Policy.



## 7. DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Digital Media: Requires parental consent, stored securely, restricted to official channels.
- Social Media: Staff personal accounts use high privacy, avoid school email, and require approval for school content, with no student/parent connections under 18.
- Email: Mandates school email accounts.
- Website: Provides accurate content (contact info, services, fees, inspection reports, achievements) complies with ADEK policies.

### Compliance with ADEK Policies and Guidelines

Merryland International School is committed to maintaining full compliance with all applicable ADEK policies and guidelines, including the ADEK Inclusion Policy, Student Protection Policy, Extracurricular Activities and Events Policy, and Records Policy. Non-compliance may result in penalties per ADEK regulations and Federal Decree-Law No. 31 of 2021.

### Approved by:

Principal,

Merryland International School

**Date:** 08 September 2025

**Next Review by:** September 2026