

Improving your digital skills

Your digital skills are just as important as your child's. The best way for everyone to keep up with changing technology is to practise, play and learn together. This topic looks at digital skills to help you to stay involved in your child's education and keep in touch with teachers and school staff.

Lots of information is only available online, in an email or on a computer. Knowing how to save, download and open files quickly, will help you manage your child's school information.

Saving a file

Saving a file allows you to access it again without losing what you have created. For example, if your child is doing homework on the computer and they haven't finished, they can save their work and work on it later.

You can save files that you create yourself, downloaded from the internet or copy from an external storage device, like a USB.

For files you create yourself, click on the 'File' button at the top of the screen, then click 'Save' or 'Save a Copy.'

For files on external memory storage, you need to open the file first and then follow the same process to save the file to your device.

Downloading a file

For files on the internet, you need to download the file to save it to your device. Click on the 'Download' icon if available, or 'Save As.'

Saving to devices

Laptops and computers have a file explorer system to find files.

Locations you can save and look for files and folders include:

- the local drive
- Desktop
- Downloads
- Documents
- Pictures

The desktop is the screen that you see when you turn on your computer or laptop. It is an easy place to save files you want to find quickly.

You can also save files to an external memory device, like a USB memory stick or a portable hard drive.

Saving to the cloud

The cloud is storage that is not on your computer or an external memory. The cloud saves files to the internet, allowing files to be accessed from different devices.

Different files

You can download and save all types of files, but some files need a specific program to open them. The most common example is a PDF. PDFs can be opened with a default computer program or Adobe Acrobat Reader. Adobe Acrobat Reader is free to download from the internet.

Many files can be opened in more than one program. You can select which program to use.

Common file types include:

- documents | .doc or .pdf
- pictures | .jpg or .png
- audio | .mp3
- video | .mp4

For more technical terms visit Be Connected's [Glossary of tech terms](#).

Files and Folders

Files are individual items saved. For example, a picture, word document or song.

Files are saved into folders to make them easier to find. You can create folders inside other folders and make folder structures that make sense for you..

For example, a top folder called 'Music' could have two folders inside for different music genres. Then a folder for each artist which could contain album folders or individual song files.

Computers and laptops have a system to find files that are saved to your device. On Windows, this is called 'File Explorer' and on Mac it is called 'Finder.'

Tips for saving files

Name your file something that makes sense to you. The same applies to folders. You can change the view of your files and folders and organise them by name, size or date.

Visit the [Be Connected website](#) to learn about managing files on a windows computer desktop.

Take some time to explore your computer's file system:

1. Open the computer's file explorer and see how the files and folders are arranged.
2. Create a new folder.
3. Open a file from the file explorer.
4. Create a document and save it to the folder you made.
5. Exit everything, then find the document and open it through the file explorer.

Emails and attachments

Email is an electronic way of sending and receiving messages. Your email address is unique to you and is made up of a username, the @ symbol which is pronounced 'at', and an email provider.

Emails addresses will look similar to this: username@emailprovider.com

It is important to make sure the email address is spelled correctly, so your emails are delivered to the right person. It is free to send and receive emails, as long as you are connected to the internet.

Email providers

Some of the main email providers are:

- [Gmail by Google](#)
- [Outlook by Microsoft](#)
- [Yahoo Mail by Yahoo](#)

Attachments

Emails can be messages, or you can attach files to share with others. When writing emails, there is a 'paperclip' icon to attach files. Clicking the paperclip will bring up a menu to find the file you want to attach. If the file you want to send is saved on the same device, it is very easy to attach to your email. Remember, there is a limit to how big the file can be. If it is too big, the email will not send.

Visit the [Be Connected website](#) to find lessons on managing attachments.

Emailing schools

Email is a good way to communicate with your child's school. Everything is saved so you can go back and check the information sent and received.

You must provide an email address when you enrol your child in school. If you change your email address, you need to let the school know. Schools can only have one email address on your child's enrolment details, so if it is incorrect, you may miss out on information from the school.

Student email accounts

All students enrolled in a Tasmanian Government school are assigned a student email address. This email address is created when they enrol but may not be activated until your child is older. Once the student email account is active, your child can send and receive emails with this email address. They will be able to access the Microsoft 365 programs for free.

Activity: Send an email with attachments

1. Sign in to your email account on the computer.

2. Attach the file that was saved in the previous section.
3. Send the email to someone you know, let them know it's a test.
4. Open the email received and save the attachment to computer.

What is Microsoft 365?

Microsoft 365 (sometimes called Microsoft Office) is a set of programs Tasmanian Government school students have free access to when their student email is active. If your child's student email account is not active, you can sign up for a free Microsoft account to get access to the Microsoft Office 365 apps online.

Each program has a different purpose. Your child will use some more than others at school.

Microsoft Word

- Create documents such as reports, flyers, letters, resumes and essays.
- Add text, images, art and videos.
- Track and review changes.

Microsoft Excel

- Create spreadsheets.
- Enter and sort data.
- Perform a variety of calculations, manipulations, visualisations and analysis of data.
- Make graphs and spot trends.

Microsoft PowerPoint

With Microsoft PowerPoint you can:

- Create presentations from a blank document or with a template.
- Add audio, videos, and animation effects.
- Present live with presenter notes or save and share later.

Microsoft Outlook

- Organise your email account.
- Manage your Outlook calendar to schedule meetings and appointments.

Microsoft Teams

- Collaborate and communicate with a group, team or class.
- Use chat to share ideas quickly.
- Use video calls to contact, record, present, host and save video presentations.
- Share and edit files at the same time as other people.

Visit the [Microsoft website](#) to learn more about the programs.

Want to know more?

There is a lot of information online that can help you to improve your digital skills.

- [BeConnected](#): An Australian government initiative committed to increasing the confidence, skills and online safety of older Australians with low internet skills. Tip sheets available in 9 languages, including English.
- [Digital Ready for Daily Life](#): A Tasmanian government initiative offering help to get you online safely and confidently, as well as enjoy the opportunities that digital tools and devices offer.

- [GCFGlobal](#): International program to help people learn the essential skills they need to live and work in the 21st century. Over 200 free tutorials available in English, Spanish and Portuguese, with additional languages available for certain topics.

Resources

- [DECYP: Help with technology](#)
- [Be Connected: Free online learning](#)
- [Digital Ready for Daily Life: Online learning for Tasmanians](#)
- [GCF Global: Free online learning](#)
- [GCF Global: Free Internet Basics Tutorial](#)
- [Microsoft Support: Office 365 Quick Start Guides](#)
- [Microsoft Support: Office cheat sheets](#)
- [Australian Communications Consumer Action Network: All learning resources.](#)
- [BeConnected: Downloading and saving documents](#)
- [BeConnected: Managing attachments](#)

For the latest
information,
scan the QR code.

