



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

We recognise both the benefits, and challenges, of using Facebook and other social media platforms in the early childhood setting. This policy has been developed to provide employees, families, volunteers and students with standards of use as they engage in conversations or interactions using social media for official, professional and personal use.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1.1	Service philosophy and purposes	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
7.1.3	Roles and Responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service.
7.2	Leadership	Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
84	Awareness of child protection law
181	Confidentiality and storage of records
183	Storage of records and other documents

RELATED POLICIES

Child Safe Environment Policy	Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy
Code of Conduct Policy	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Cyber Safety Policy	Respect for Children Policy
Dealing with Complaints Policy	Responsible Person Policy
Family Communication Policy	Student and Volunteer Workers Policy
Health and Safety Policy	Supervision Policy
	Work Health and Safety Policy

PURPOSE

Being part of our Service entails a position of trust and responsibility. We aim to ensure that our Service, children, educators, and/or families are not compromised in any form on Facebook, or any other social media platform, and that all social media usage complies with our Service’s philosophy, relevant policies, and the code of conduct.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, management, the approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, and visitors (including contractors) of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Social media is defined as “*forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)*” (Merriam-Webster dictionary).

We recognise that there are many advantages in using social media to network within Service operations. It is important to approach usage with caution, through careful and systematic management. Whilst healthy debate may provide thought-provoking discussion, there are guidelines in place to ensure that our Service remains open and welcoming for children, families, and staff.

The Child Safe Standards recognise the importance of safe physical and online environments to promote safety and wellbeing of all children. Our Service has the responsibility to ensure children and educators are protected from harm when they engage with digital technology including social media.

This policy applies to all forms of social media including (but not limited to):

- Social networking sites, e.g. Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn
- Image sharing sites, e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, and Imgur

- Music/dance videos, e.g. Tik Tok
- Video hosting sites e.g. YouTube and Vimeo
- Community blogs, e.g. Tumblr and Medium
- Discussion sites, e.g. Reddit and Quora

SERVICE SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

Our Service has a Facebook page and an Instagram page which are primarily used for information sharing and marketing purposes. The Facebook page is operated by our Nominated Supervisor via a centre computer. Consent will be gained from our families before any images of children are shared on our social media platforms. No identifying information, such as names, regarding our children will be shared.

PRIVACY

- All staff and educators must remain aware that they represent and could be identified as an employee of the Service through any online activity.
- Staff and educators must maintain appropriate privacy of families, employees, students, children and volunteers at all times
- Absolutely no written content will be published to our social media platforms without the implicit and written permission of families to whom the content relates.
- Our Service will gain implicit and written family permission prior to posting photos of children.
- Passwords will not be shared without authorisation from management.
- Our Service will remain up to date with any changes to our social media platforms ensuring privacy settings remain up to date.

REGARDING THE SERVICE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM, THE APPROVED PROVIDER OR NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- obtain written authorisation from a child's parents prior to posting any comment or photos of their child to the platform
- ensure personal information about families, children and staff is not posted on-line
- ensure the highest level of privacy settings are established and maintained on the account
- ensure all passwords are kept confidential
- log out of social media platforms when not in use and prior to leaving the Service
- regularly scan online content related to the Service to ensure appropriateness.

- adhere to our *Dealing with Complaints Policy* and procedures to investigate any occurrences where a person working at the Service may:
 - post photos or information of the Service or children
 - defame, harass or bully any other person who works at the Service or is connected to the Service
- ensure that any staff or educator found guilty of any social media platform misconduct is aware that this may result in disciplinary procedures or termination of employment.

Regarding all social media, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff members, volunteers and students will not:

- access personal social media platform accounts on any workplace device
- access personal social media platforms whilst educating and caring for children
- post any photos taken of the children enrolled at the service on their personal social media platforms
- post any information about the Service, colleagues, children, or families on any personal social media platform
- vilify, harass or bully any other person who works at the Service, family or community member connected to the Service
- post offensive or derogatory comments or information that could bring their professional standing or that of the Service into disrepute
- use their personal camera or phone to take photos or video whilst at the Service.

PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Staff members are to use their own personal discretion when adding a family of the Service as a ‘friend’ on any social media platforms. The Service does not recommend that staff add families of the Service to personal social media accounts as they will still be seen as a representative of the Service and required to uphold the Service’s Code of Conduct on all posts. It is extremely important not to post information about the Service, colleagues, children, or families on personal social media accounts, as this not only contravenes the Service policies and *Code of Conduct* but is considered a breach of the Commonwealth’s *Privacy Act 1988* and *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

Families are asked to respect that staff may have a personal policy on adding families to personal social media accounts due to their professional philosophy, and that the Service does not recommend staff have families as friends on their private account.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

For inappropriate conduct to be unlawful, there is a need to demonstrate a connection between the behaviour and the employment relationship that:

- is likely to cause serious damage to the relationship between the employee and Service
- damages or harms the Service's interest or reputation
- is incompatible with the employee's duties in the education and care sector.

A person who has been involved in inappropriate conduct may require reprimand as per our *Code of Conduct Policy*. This may lead to disciplinary procedures or termination of their position.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Our Service will continue to evaluate and assess our online safety practices through critical reflections, checklists, professional learning and discussions with families and staff.

RESOURCES

Australian Government Office of the eSafety commission www.esafety.gov.au/early-years

eSafety Early Years Online safety for under 5s. <https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-02/Early-years-booklet.pdf>

eSafety Early Years Checklist <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/esafety-early-years-program-for-educators/checklist>

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Social Media Policy* will be updated and reviewed annually in consultation with families, staff, educators and management.

SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Dictionary by Merriam-Webster

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).

eSafety Commissioner: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/esafety-early-years-program-for-educators>

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2023).

Privacy Act 1988.

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Megan Hipkiss	Centre Support	July 2024
POLICY REVIEWED	AUGUST 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	AUGUST 2024
VERSION	V10.08.23		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual policy review • small typos/grammatical errors repaired • Continuous improvement section added 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
AUGUST 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' • minor formatting edits within text • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required 	AUGUST 2023	
AUGUST 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related Policies section - Dealing with Complaints Policy- name change (Grievance Policy) • minor edits- formatting • sources checked for currency 	AUGUST 2022	
AUGUST 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Principles of Child Safe Standards added • information regarding continuous improvement- eSafety Commissioner added • minor editing • addition of Tik Tok reference • additional resources added for e-learning 	AUGUST 2021	
AUGUST 2019	<p>Policy modified into a 'social media' policy. Additional information added to points. Headings modified to reflect inclusion of 'social media'</p> <p>Sources checked for currency. Unrelated references/sources deleted. References corrected, added &/or updated, and alphabetised.</p>	AUGUST 2020	
AUGUST 2018	Changes made to outline consequences for inappropriate conduct and compliance with privacy laws	AUGUST 2019	
OCTOBER 2017	Updated references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard	MAY 2018	

MAY 2017	Major changes to the policy with the additional specifications to ensure a clear and precise understanding of expectations	MAY 2018
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