

Social Media Policy

Scope

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

Statement

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.

Legislative requirements

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	Respect for Children Policy
Code of Conduct Policy	Responsible Person Policy
Dealing with Complaints Policy (Family)	Student and Volunteer Workers Policy
Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy	Supervision Policy
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	Work Health and Safety Policy

Goal

Being part of our Preschool entails a position of trust and responsibility. We aim to ensure that our Preschool, 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.

Strategies

All strategies detailed below will be implemented to the extent reasonably practicable.

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 Preschool's 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 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 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, 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 Website

Our Preschool has a website in order to converse and share information with our families and community, which is administered by the Director/Nominated Supervisor. This is a public page where anyone can access this information.

The intent for our Service website and Storyparkare to:

- keep families in touch with what's happening at the Preschool, including upcoming and special events.
- connect with other parents and share thoughts about programs, policies, and procedures
- provide an avenue to ask parents their thoughts and provide appropriate research-based information on common child rearing issues.
- provide educational information to families and employees.

NOTE: WCP does not currently have an authorised or official account for the organisation on any social media platforms.

Privacy

- All staff and educators must remain aware that they represent and could be identified as an employee of the Preschool through any online activity.
- Staff and educators must maintain appropriate privacy of families, employees, students, children and volunteers, including when they have obtained permission to publish content.
- Absolutely no written content will be published to Facebook without the implicit and written permission of families to whom the content relates.
- Our Preschool will gain implicit and written family permission prior to posting photos of children on our Website.

The Director/ Nominated Supervisor will:

- obtain written authorisation from a child's parents prior to posting any comment or photos of their child to the website
- ensure personal information about families, children and staff is not posted on the website
- regularly scan online content related to the Preschool to ensure appropriateness.
- adhere to our *Dealing with Complaints* Policy and procedures to investigate any occurrences where a person working at the Preschool may:
 - post photos or information of the Preschool or children
 - defame, harass or bully any other person who works at the Preschool or is connected to the Preschool
- ensure that any staff or educator found guilty of any Facebook misconduct (on any Facebook private page) 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 Facebook accounts or any other social media accounts on any workplace device
- access personal Facebook or any other social media accounts whilst educating and caring for children
- post any photos taken of the children enrolled at the Preschool on their personal Facebook or any other social media account
- post any information about the Preschool, colleagues, children, or families on any personal social media account
- vilify, harass or bully any other person who works at the Service, family or community member connected to the Preschool
- post offensive or derogatory comments or information that could bring their professional standing or that of the Preschool into disrepute
- use their personal camera or phones to take photos or video whilst at the Preschool.

Personal Social Media Accounts

Staff members are to use their own personal discretion when adding a family of the Preschool as a 'friend' on Facebook or any other social media. The Preschool does not recommend that staff add families of the Preschool to personal social media accounts as they will still be seen as a representative of the Preschool and required to uphold the Preschool's Code of Conduct on all posts. It is extremely important not to post information about the Preschool, colleagues, children, or families on personal social media accounts, as this not only contravenes the Preschool's 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 Preschool does not recommend staff to have families as friends on their private account.

If adding families to personal social media accounts, educators will adhere to relevant policies, including the Code of Conduct of the Service.

Consequences for inappropriate conduct

For inappropriate conduct to be lawful, 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 Preschool
- damages or harms the Preschool'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 Preschool will continue to evaluate and assess our online safety practices through critical reflections, checklists, professional learning and discussions with families and staff.

Educators and staff will complete online training through the eSafety Commissioner to ensure staff remain up to date with current research and are aware of how to report inappropriate content on social media sites.

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>

Source

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

Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).

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

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017). (Amended 2020).

Privacy Act 1988.

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Review

POLICY REVIEWED	MARCH 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MARCH 2024
POLICY CREATION & MODIFICATIONS	Policy modified into a 'social media' policy. Additional information added to points. Headings modified to reflect inclusion of 'social media' Sources checked for currency. Unrelated references/sources deleted. References corrected, added &/or updated, and alphabetised. Adopted CCCD policy		