

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Digital technologies and computers have become an integral part of many children’s daily lives. For this reason, it is important that our educators are not only familiar with the use of digital technologies, but are able to guide children’s understanding of, and ability interact, engage access and use a range of digital technology. Technology and media items will only be used as an extension to the daily program assisting in the development of social, physical, emotional, cognitive, language and creative potential of each child. Digital technology can be helpful in the retelling of stories about our culture, help to celebrate diversity and assist in providing an inclusive and equitable educational program.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE		
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
73	Educational Program
76	Information about educational program to be given to parents
84	Awareness of child protection law
149	Volunteers and students
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
181	Confidentiality of records and storage of records
183	Storage of records and other documents
184	Storage of records after service approval transferred

RELATED POLICIES

Child Protection Policy	Educational Program Policy
Child Safe Environment Policy	Mobile Device Usage Policy
Code of Conduct Policy	Photograph Policy
Cyber-Safety policy	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Dealing with Complaints Policy	Social Media Policy

PURPOSE

Our OSHC Service will implement responsible behaviour when using technology, respecting the Service, children and young people, and the privacy of families and educators. Educators will exercise appropriate judgment and behave in a professional and ethical manner when using technology. At all times, educators will provide a child safe environment and supervise children when using technology to minimise the opportunity for abuse or other harm to occur.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, volunteers, students and visitors of the OSHC Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Digital technology, when used appropriately, can be a tool for learning, especially when educators play an active role. The Internet is a magnificent resource for research, communication and extending programming ideas and interests. Technology use within our Service aims to encourage children to solve problems and use logical reasoning, leading children to make decisions and choices and assisting them to use computer software competently and safely. Our educators are diligent in ensuring children are only able to access age-appropriate technology on any device provided by the Service

In the OSHC environment it is also important to have a school/leisure balance which means allowing time for play and leisure activities (*My Time, Our Place*). To achieve this, our OSHC Service may offer children opportunities to use age-appropriate and non-violent video games and/or gaming apps under the supervision of educators. Mobile devices are not permitted to be utilised in our OSHC Service (*see Mobile Device Usage Policy*).

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

- App: An abbreviation of the term 'Application' - refers to small programs that can be downloaded or installed on mobile phones
- Coding: Process of creating and inputting messages that can be understood by others or a digital device such as a computer robotic toy or app
- Digital data: Information that is transmitted digitally, including (but not limited to) text, audio, images and video
- Digital technology: Enables large amounts of data to be stored and shared so it can be accessed, created and used by people anywhere and at any time
- Digital documentation: Recording and analysing children's engagement and learning using digital tools. (Includes photos, text and video and may be communicated via an online program).
- Interactive whiteboard: A digital screen that projects content for groups of children to view or co-view or co-engage. Incorporates touch sensitive or responsive controls so the user may engage via the screen rather than a mouse or keyboard

(Source: ECA Statement on young children and digital technologies, 2018.)

EXAMPLES OF TECHNOLOGY USED WITHIN OUR SERVICE MAY INCLUDE:

- touchscreen devices- tablets (iPads)
- programs that develop literacy or numeracy skills with ICT such as word processing, desktop publishing
- internet and information literacy skills
- Robotic toys- such as bee bots
- scanners
- Interactive whiteboards/data projectors

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- adhere to all obligations under the *Education and Care National Law and Regulations*
- ensure educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy
- ensure families are aware of this *Technology Policy*
- promote and support a child safe environment
- embed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations into the organisational structure and operations
- ensure all staff, educators, volunteers and students are aware of current child protection law, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and their obligation to protect children from harm

- ensure all staff, educators, volunteers and students are aware of the National Model Code and Guidelines and adhere to these recommendations for taking images or video of children
- record WWCC/vulnerable people checks of volunteers and students
- maintain a positive culture that includes and promotes safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services
- identify technology training needs of educators and provide professional development
- provide professional development, information and resources to educators from the eSafety Commissioner-[Professional learning program for teachers](#)
- provide professional learning to educators and staff in response to the ECA- *Statement on young children and digital technology*
- provide regular training for all staff on reporting obligations (including mandatory reporting) and child safe practices
- report any breach of child protection legislation to relevant authorities- police, NSW regulatory authority through NQA ITS portal (*see: Child Safe Environment, Child Protection Policies*)
- reflect on our OSHC Service's physical environment, layout and design to ensure it supports child safe practices when children are engaged in using technology
 - ensure risk assessments are completed for all physical and online activities and identify areas where adults may have opportunities to interact with children unsupervised
 - perform regular audits to identify risks to children's safety and changes in room set-ups that can indicate areas of higher-risk and become supervision 'blind spots'
 - ensure location of digital technology/equipment allows educators to remain in line-of-sight of other staff members when working with children
 - only permit children to use devices in open areas where staff can monitor children's use
 - ensure all devices are set up safety- with controls, filters and safe search settings
 - ensure all devices are password protected with access for staff only
- ensure the Service *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* is adhered to at all times by staff and educators, families, visitors, volunteers and students
- ensure there is no unauthorised access to the Service's technology facilities (programs, software program etc.)
- ensure all educators have appropriate login details to provide secure usage
- ensure all technological devices have current virus protection software installed
- develop guidelines about how technology will be used within our Service
- provide information to parents about technology use within the Service

- seek permission from families to use digital documentation including photographs of children via social media and/or other forms of documentation platforms (see: *Social Media Policy*)
- ensure children, educators and parents are aware of our Service's complaints handling process to raise any concerns they may have about the use of digital technologies or any other matter (see: *Dealing with Complaints Policy*)
- provide a range of technology devices for educators to utilise- Smartboards, iPads, printers
- must ensure that no breaches of copyright eventuate if screening/viewing DVDs

EDUCATORS WILL:

- comply with current legislation and Service policies
- keep passwords confidential
- model appropriate use of digital devices and online services for learning purposes
- identify and minimise risks to children in physical and online environments
- only permit children to use devices in open areas of the service to ensure close monitoring and supervision
- respond to and report any breaches and incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services to management
- log out of computers and software programs after each use
- only access and modify files and data for which they have authorisation
- not harass, slander, intimidate, embarrass, defame, or seek to offend another person, group of people, or organisation via technological devices
- not make copies of, transmit, steal, or loan copies to other persons of Service documents
- not use personal mobile devices to take photos or videos of children or young people at the OSHC Service, access social media (Facebook, Instagram or other) or breach children and families' privacy (see: [ACECQA Guidelines for the National Model Code](#))
- ask permission before taking photos or video of a child or young person on any device and explain how these images will be used
- provide adequate supervision to children when using computers or other technology
- ensure privacy levels are set on electronic devices when in use by young children
- participate in professional development opportunities about online safety and digital technology
- ensure children's personal information where children can be identified such as name, address, age, date of birth etc. is not shared online

- ensure they are aware of their mandatory reporting requirements and report any concerns related to child safety including inappropriate use of digital technology to the approved provider or nominated supervisor.

IN RELATION TO CHILDREN, EDUCATORS WILL:

- consider the developmental levels of children when using technology for learning
- support children's natural curiosity for technology within the OSHC Service
- provide children with access to age-appropriate technologies to help develop their computer literacy skills
- educate children on ways to recognise safe physical and online environments
- discuss online behaviour as part of discussions and activities promoting respectful relationships
- only provide programs or apps that they have viewed and assessed prior to introducing to children
- only provide games that are age-appropriate and non-violent
- strictly supervise all children engaged in using technology
- build on children's learning and inspire the ongoing and enthusiastic acquisition of knowledge through technology
- use technology to build on current projects and document children's learning
- limit the amount of time spent on screens as per recommended screen times
- support children in turn-taking and learning to share when using digital technologies in collaboration with others
- provide a child safe environment to children- reminding them if they encounter anything unexpected that makes them feel uncomfortable, scared or upset, they can seek support from staff
- discuss with children the role of screen time in their lives and support them in making appropriate choices about their use of screen time for both education and recreation
- model appropriate screen behaviours and self-regulation to the children
- encourage alternative leisure experiences for rest and relaxation that are not always technology-reliant
- ensure that under no circumstances the screen is used as a reward or to manage challenging behaviours
- educate and support children to begin to develop skills to critically evaluate sources of information on the internet.

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF TECHNOLOGY. OUR OSHC SERVICE WILL:

- implement risk management strategies to ensure children are always supervised when using any digital device

- ensure use of digital technologies are used to promote social interactions between children, peers and adults
- ensure programs are carefully selected and are suitable to the needs and development levels of each child using or watching various types of technology or media
- ensure programs and apps are chosen to support and promote children’s cognitive investment
- ensure all online devices have appropriate filtering and monitoring in place with safe settings activated
- ensure all devices are password protected with access for staff only
- ensure technology is used to assist in expanding the content of the daily program and appropriate current affairs (e.g., the Olympic Games, environmental awareness).
- ensure technology is predominantly used where play-based and ‘hands-on’ experiences cannot provide the same information (e.g., investigating planets or dinosaurs). It will not replace appropriate experiences nor professional pedagogy.
- ensure programs are chosen that are engaging and age appropriate to children: Only ‘G’ rated television programs and movies will be viewed at the Service
- ensure the use of TV and watching DVD’s is kept to a minimum. When used:
 - programs depicting violence and/or inappropriate content (including graphic news reports) will not be shown.
 - TV programs or videos will only be shown that have positive messages about relationships, family and life
 - information about programs to be viewed will be shared with families beforehand to ensure that they approve of the content. Information may include:
 - title
 - synopsis
 - rating
 - length of program
 - all content will be socially and culturally considerate and appropriate.
- adhere to recommended timeframes for ‘screen time’ according to Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines are:
 - Children 5-12 years of age should limit screen time for entertainment to no more than 2 hours a day
- ensure children will be taught responsible concepts of digital use and citizenship are *‘growing up*
- ensure only quality developmentally appropriate interactive media is used.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) INTERACTIONS AND GUIDELINES

Educators and staff members adopting the use of AI need to be aware of limitations, privacy risks and the potential for errors in the responses and information generated. AI can assist and support staff as a documentation tool; however, it is their responsibility to ensure the accuracy of information generated and not rely upon it as an authoritative source.

Educators and staff should ensure they input original work into the AI program/tool and are required to monitor, verify and check information obtained from AI to ensure specific details are contextually relevant. Data and privacy concerns must be addressed, and staff should not enter details which may identify individual children, such as names and date of birth.

OUR OSHC SERVICE WILL:

- create shared understandings between families, educators and the Service about digital technology use, by adults, in front of children
- provide information regarding online safety to families [eSafetyparents](#)
- provide families with information about the digital technology used within the OSHC Service
- provide information and advice to families about the selection of digital media content, apps and games that are appropriate for use by school aged children
- provide information about the apps and programs used within the Service
- support families to understand that negative effects of exposure to disturbing or arousing content and screens before sleep time
- request written consent from parents/families to collect and share personal information, images or videos of their children online (Website, Facebook, Instagram)
- provide information to parents and families about how to make a complaint and what to expect from our complaints handling processes (*see: Dealing with Complaints Policy*).

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Technology Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

SOURCES

- Australia Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Embedding the National Child Safe Principles. NQF 2019 Review](#)
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2024). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#).
- Australian Government Department of Education. [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.V2.0, 2022](#)
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2024). [Taking Images and Video of Children While Providing Early Childhood Education and Care. Guidelines For The National Model Code](#).
- Australian Government. [eSafety Commissioner Early Years program for educators](#)
- Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. (2014). [Australia’s Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines](#)
- Early Childhood Australia [Statement on young children and digital technologies](#). (2018).
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).
- Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).
- NSW Department of Education. (2021). [Implementing the Child Safe Standards. A guide for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services](#).
- NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian. (2020). [Guide to the Child Safe Standards](#)
- The Australian Council on Children and the Media for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. (2011). *Television and young children: Quality, choice and the role of parents: What the experts and parents say*.
- Victoria Government. (2023). [The Child Safe Standards-Early childhood services](#).
- [Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Regulations \(WA\) Act 2012](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Libby Haines	Director	October 2024
POLICY REVIEWED	OCTOBER 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	OCTOBER 2025
VERSION NUMBER	V9.10.24		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> annual policy maintenance minor changes to guidelines for use of technology section additional information re: National Model Code added additional information added re: use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in ECEC services sources updated where required 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
OCTOBER 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> annual policy review inclusion of National Child Safe principles- ACEQCA sources updated where required 	OCTOBER 2024	