

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Rationale and Policy Considerations

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.

Legislation and Government Requirements

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (SA)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Privacy Act (1988) Commonwealth

National Quality Framework

Education and Care Services National Regulations 84, 181, 183

National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education Elements 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.2

Policy Statement

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.

Strategies for Policy 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.

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
- Community blogs e.g. Tumblr and Medium
- Discussion sites e.g. Reddit and Quora

Service Facebook Account

Our Service has a Facebook account to converse and share information with our families and community, which is administered by the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor.

Only current enrolled families and staff will have access to the Service Facebook page. The page is locked as "Privacy type: Closed: Limited public content. Members can see all content."

The intent for our Service Facebook page is to:

- keep families in touch with what's happening at the Service, including upcoming and special events.
- provide educational information to families and employees.
- Post Newsletters, Menus and other information

NOTE: *The Service Facebook account must not be used for personal comments or discussions.*

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, including when they have obtained permission to publish content to the Service Facebook account.
- Absolutely no written content will be published to Facebook 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 Facebook ensuring privacy setting remain up to date.

In regard to the Service Facebook page the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will:

- obtain written authorisation from a child's parents prior to posting any comment or photos that identify their child to the page
- 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 Facebook when not in use and prior to leaving the Service
- regularly scan online content related to the Service to ensure appropriateness.
- adhere to our *Grievance 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 Facebook misconduct (on both the Service Facebook page and any private page) is aware that this may result in termination of employment.

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

- educators are discouraged from using 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 service on their personal Facebook or any other social media account
- post any information about the Service, 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 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 phones 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 Facebook or any other social media. 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 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 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 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.

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.

Links to other Policies

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

Sourced from

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>
Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
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. (2020).
Privacy Act 1988.
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

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