



Electronic and Social Media Policy

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Rationale and Policy Considerations

The education and care services has the right to protect the wellbeing, privacy, and safety of children, families and educators regarding the safe use of digital technologies and online environments. Digital tools and online platforms provide valuable opportunities for learning, creativity, communication, and connection. However, they also carry potential risks such as exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, privacy breaches, and over-reliance on technology.

This policy ensures that all members of our community engage with digital technologies responsibly, ethically and in ways that support positive learning outcomes. It is guided by the principles of child safety, respect, and digital citizenship and aligns with relevant legislation, child protection frameworks and best-practice standards for early childhood and education services.

Most relevant policies and procedures

- Code of Conduct
- Providing a Protective Environment
- Visitors, Casual Educators and Students
- Excursions
- Educational Programs
- Excursion Checklist
- Personal Electronic Devices Authorisation Form
- Photo / Video Release Form for Children

Links to ECA Code of Ethics

- **Act in the best interests of all children.**
- **Acknowledge the uniqueness and potential of all children, in recognition that enjoying their childhood without undue pressure is important.**
- **Be sensitive to the vulnerabilities of children and families and respond in ways that empower and maintain the dignity of all children and families.**
- **Maintain confidentiality and respect the right of the family to privacy.**
- **Encourage my colleagues to adopt and act in accordance with this Code, and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours.**
- **Ensure that images of children and other data are only collected with informed consent and are stored and utilised according to legislative and policy requirements.**

Scope

This policy applies to educators, management, students, volunteers, contractors, visitors and families of Lifestreamers Early Learning

Policy Statement

Our service recognises the importance of digital technologies as tools that can enhance learning, communication and creativity. At the same time, we are committed to ensuring that children, families, and educators engage with these technologies in ways that are safe, respectful and supportive of wellbeing. This policy establishes clear expectations for the responsible and ethical use of digital tools and online environments in our community.

Policy Principles

Our service is committed to the safe, responsible and ethical use of digital technologies and online environments. We recognise the value of technology in supporting children's learning, communication and creativity, while also acknowledging the need to protect their safety, wellbeing, and privacy. Digital practices at our service will:

- Ensure children are always supervised and guided in their use of technology.

- Protect the confidentiality of children, families, and educators by using secure and approved platforms.
- Promote respectful online behaviour and responsible digital citizenship.
- Support families through clear communication and informed consent regarding digital practices.
- Be regularly reviewed to reflect current legislation, child protection requirements and best practice guidelines.

Overview

Lifestreamers Early Learning will ensure that electronic media and devices are available to enhance communication with families, children, and educators, through a variety of means. Lifestreamers Early Learning will ensure educators and families have access to relevant software to enhance their experience at the service and create a positive culture. The National Model Code: Taking Images or Videos of Children While Providing Early Childhood Education and Care, informs decision making and guidance for services regarding the use and provision of electronic devices.

When used intentionally as part of implementing an educational program, electronic devices can be effectively utilised when providing education and care, including to assist in documenting a child's learning.

To minimise risks to children, child safe practices need to be clearly set, understood, and implemented when taking images or recording videos of children whilst at the service or on excursion. The Code of Conduct will be implemented in line with this policy.

Images, videos, and audio taken of children will always be respectful and appropriate. Images and videos deemed appropriate are those directly relevant to the child's participation in the education and care program. Inappropriate images or videos of children include any child in any state of undress, be compromising to their privacy, or where a child is distressed, anxious, or dysregulated.

Professional Development and Training

All educators will be made aware of this policy throughout their induction and regularly throughout their employment. Where technology advances, new information and training will be developed to support the effective review and implementation of this policy. Child safety will be an area of ongoing professional development for all educators to foster a child safe environment and child safe culture within the centre.

The Use of Electronic Media and Devices with Children

- The use of electronic media and devices are permitted as part of the educational program, where it is deemed age and developmentally appropriate.
- As per the recommendations outlined in the [Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines](#), educators will limit or prevent screen time for children. Educators are to consider the recommendations for sedentary screen time for children, volume, screen size and environment. Screen viewing will not be planned for children under 2.5 years old.
- Educators are to support children and their involvement in the use of safe technology.
- Quiet, relaxing, and soothing music or white noise is to be utilised at sleep/rest time where appropriate. Volume of music or white noise is to be considered.
- Educators are to ensure that all electronic devices are put away when not in use. Charging cables and power cables are to be kept out of reach of children and stored safely.
- Management will ensure that all electrical devices are tagged and checked by an electrician annually.
- Music played in common areas are to be played at an appropriate volume and support a calming environment. Radio stations and personal music are not permitted. Online streaming services where uncensored content and advertisements may play should not be used.
- Internet use should only be used when it links to the educational program and enhances children's learning. Educators and children are encouraged to be co-researchers when using the internet.

- No child will browse the internet alone and an educator will always be actively supervising children when using the internet to monitor the potential risk of inappropriate content and spontaneous 'pop ups'.
- Only child safe websites are to be viewed and accessed. (You Tube Kids)
- All websites and online content should be previewed by educators to verify their content, minimising the risk for children to view or engage with inappropriate images or videos. When using online content, the site should be accessed and ads played before allowing children to view the desired content.
- Educators, students, and volunteers are to use service electronic devices for business purposes only.
- The use of personal devices including but not limited to smartphones, iPad and laptops are prohibited whilst working with children. The messaging, phone calls and WIFI function of personal devices are not to be operational during work hours.
- Educators should consider appropriate times when using tablets or devices to document children's learning and routines. The use of electronic devices should not interfere with effective supervision practices and relationships with children.

The Use of Photography and Videography within the Service and on Excursions

- Service phones and iPads and other photographic devices are to be used for photographing children, events, environments and documentation. Children's rights will always be respected when photos and videos are being taken of them and their environment.
- Individual Child Enrolment Forms will provide authority for children's image to be captured, upon enrolment. Where necessary, the service is to ensure they detail what the photos will be used for and families will sign a permission form before any filming is to take place in the service.
- Images for the purpose of marketing will only be used after permission has been authorised on the enrolment form.
- Personal devices will not be used to take photos, videos, or audio of the children whilst in the care of the service.
- Personal electronic devices that can take photos or record images will not be carried or worn while providing education and care to children, except for authorised essential purposes. Authorised essential purposes may include the following:
 - communication in an emergency situation involving a lost child, injury to child or educators, or other serious incident, or in the case of a lockdown or evacuation of the service premises
 - personal health requirements, e.g., heart or blood sugar level monitoring
 - disability, e.g., where a personal electronic device is an essential means of communication for an educator or other educators member
 - family necessity, e.g., a worker with an ill or dying family member
 - technology failure, e.g., when a temporary outage of service-issued electronic devices has occurred
 - local emergency event occurring, to receive emergency notifications through government warning systems, for example, bushfire evacuation text notification.
 - Excursions for the sole purpose of emergencies
- Prior to the use of personal devices, approval by the management team must be provided and documented on the Personal Electronic Devices Authorisation form.
- Parents and visitors are not permitted to take photographs, audio, or video within the service during opening hours, regardless of if the child is the only person in the image/recording, without prior permission from the management team.
- Digital protection of children during family events remains the responsibility of the parent/guardian.
- Families not wishing their child to be photographed should avoid activities such as Christmas performances, where the children are on display together as a group and families are permitted to video and take photos.
- Students are not permitted to take photos of children for the purpose of their placement. Alternate forms of evidence will need to be utilised.

- When engaging an external contractor such as a photographer, photos or videos may only be taken with written consent by a parent or authorised person listed on the child enrolment form.
- Where external contractors are engaged for the purpose of photography or videography, a Working with Children Check must be sighted and verified by the Responsible Person.
- Unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo sessions are not allowed at the service.

Electronic Media/Social Media

- The service management will oversee employee practices in relation to the use of electronic media.
- The use of educators, students and volunteer's personal mobile phones or devices will be prohibited in children's environments, without written consent on the Personal Electronic Devices Authorisation form completed by management.
- The use of Facebook, Instagram or any such online community sites/pages, where there is a negative reference that involves the service, its educators, families and/or children in any way will not be tolerated. The service Grievance and Complaints Management Policy will be followed should this occur.
- Educators, students, volunteers, and families are to be respectful when using social media sites. Service management encourage educators, students, and volunteers to always remain professional on social media sites and maintain confidentiality.
- Educators must not ask families to be friends on Facebook or social media but can accept requests. Asking or accepting requests from children is not permitted. Educators are to maintain professional relationships with other educators and families of the service.
- Information about educators, children, parents/guardians/caregivers and Lifestreamers Early Learning (including photos or videos) must not be posted on an educator's personal web space, or any social networking site (e.g. blogs, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), any public networking or file sharing site (e.g. You Tube) or any other type of internet websites without permission.

Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV)

- CCTV currently is installed in Area 2 and the Seminar Room and is used solely for the purpose of ensuring the safety and security of children, families, educators and the premises.
- CCTV footage will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised personnel.
- CCTV footage is stored for three months
- Footage will not be shared externally unless required by law, regulatory authorities, or in response to a serious incident.
- Families and educators will be informed of the presence and purpose of CCTV.
- CCTV will not be used in private areas such as bathrooms or nappy changing spaces.

Storage and Retention of Images and Videos

- Images and videos of children will be stored securely at the service on password protected devices.
- The use of service approved devices will be monitored by the management and not be taken off premise without first being cleared of images or videos. Where images are printed offsite (i.e. Office works, Kmart etc.) images should be uploaded on a thumb drive in the service and directly retrieved from the printing premise and returned directly to the service.
- Personal storage and file transfer media (such as SD cards, USB drives, hard drives, and cloud storage) should not be used by any person while providing education and care and working directly with children. Any exceptions must be authorised in writing by the Nominated Supervisor.
- Where service issued devices used to store images, videos of child, family or educator's sensitive data are no longer fit for purpose, they must be cleared and discarded.
- The service will complete the access and storage of digital images and videos - service review form each year to identify any risks or actions required to ensure the safe storage and retention of images and videos.

- Photos will be deleted off service issued devices after they have been used for their intended purpose.
- Management will monitor service issued devices and permanently delete images or videos of children that are no longer required.
- All service issued devices will be password protected
- Service issued devices will be locked away over weekends and holidays

Use of Playground App or Other Educational Platforms

- The use of the Playground App will be professional and appropriate by all educators
- Playground App is used to communicate with families professionally and appropriately about children’s participation in the educational program, service events, transitions and routines.

Related Legislation and Documents

- **Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012**
- **Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012**
- **National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care**

Document History

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