Early Years Services – QA2.18 Use of Electronic Devices and Media

TRIM Reference:	D16/36657	Due for Review:	30 March 2026
Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Early Years		

Purpose

It's important to keep children safe when using digital technologies and online environments as part of the educational program. Children have the right to quality education and care in a safe environment, including when using digital technologies and online.

This policy outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's commitment in:

- The taking, use, storage and destruction of images and videos of children being educated and cared for by the service.
- Obtaining authorisation from parents to take, use and store images and videos of children being educated and cared for by the service.
- The use of any optical surveillance device at the service (e.g. closed-circuit television).
- The use of any digital device issued by the service.
- The use of digital devices by children being educated and cared for by the service.
- To provide guidelines for educators to incorporate the use of electronic devices into the education and care program.
- To implementing responsible behaviour by limiting screen time when using electronic devices within the early Years Services, respecting the services, children and the privacy of families and staff.
- To ensureProviding guidelines so that educators, families, volunteers and early years students are aware of their responsibilities in regard to maintaining appropriate use of digital technologies and online environments as part of the educational program electronic devices within Early Years services.
- To ensure that educators have guidelines in appropriate use of mobile phones and other electronic devices.
- To ensureEnsuring that children and families are informed of the expectations and guidelines when using digital technologies and online environments as part of the educational program.on use of electronic devices.

Policy Principles

National Quality Standards 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.1.2, 2.2.3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 5.1.1, 5.2.2,6.1.2, 6.2.1, 7.1.1, 7.1.2
Education & Care Services National Regulations: 76, 81, 84,115, 122, 123, 124, 165, 166,167, 168, 170, 171, 172, 175, 176
Education and Care Services National Law 2010: 162A, 165, 167
Child Safe Standards: 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11

All children attending our early years services are provided with a safe environment through the creation and maintenance of a child safe culture, and this extends to the safe use of digital technologies and online environments.

Children's wellbeing is paramount and children will be actively involved in decision-making about the safe use of digital technologies and online environments at the services, including

taking, using and sharing an image or video of them on a digital device, whether by adult or child.

Management, educators, and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of child abuse or maltreatment, including abuse or maltreatment that may occur through digital technologies and online environments.

Approved providers, nominated supervisors, educators, volunteers and students, take reasonable precautions and use adequate supervision to ensure children are protected from harm that may occur through digital technologies and online environments.

Procedures to effectively manage incidents and disclosures are in place.

In adopting the National Model Code, our early years services consider the purpose and use of electronic and digital devices across each service and communicates clear expectations for educators, other staff and volunteers, to ensure child safe practices are implemented for the use of electronic and digital devices while providing early childhood education and care.

Scope

This policy applies to all Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services staff, students, volunteers, children and families accessing the Early Years service.

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 computer technologies but are able to guide children's understanding of, and ability to use them. Electronic Devices and Media items will only be used as an extension to the daily program assisting in development of social, physical, emotional, cognitive, language and creative potential of each child. Quality TV programs can be helpful in the retelling of stories about our culture and help to celebrate diversity.

Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to ensure that Council maintains quality education and care programs that provides a safe environment when utilising electronic devices.

Adults within the kindergarten environment including staff, parents, volunteers, students, visitors and contractors must not use any personal device to record or take photos of children. Staff may only use their personal device(s) during a rostered break, and only in an area that is not used for the education and care of children. Any adult that witnesses any incidence or suspicion of inappropriate behaviour or becomes aware of the transmission of any illegal material, must report it immediately.

Surf Coast Shire as the Approved Provider will:

- Ensure strict controls are in place for appropriately storing and retaining children's images and recordings.
- Meet their legislative obligations to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and hazard, including when using digital technologies and online environments
- Provide timely and effective identification of, and response to, children who may be at risk of or are experiencing abuse or maltreatment through digital technologies and online environments. This includes appropriate notification to the relevant regulatory authorities, where required.
- EnsureProvide guidelines for staffing and supervision, including monitoring for any data transfers between devices issued by the service and any other devices and ensuring device use is authorised and/or for approved purposes as per the National Model Code

- In adopting the National Model Code, our service considers the purpose and use of electronic and digital devices across the service and communicates clear expectations for educators, other staff and volunteers, to ensure child safe practices are implemented for the use of electronic and digital devices while providing early childhood education and care
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators and staff follow the *Use of Electronic Devices and Media policy.*
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, families and are available for inspection.
- Ensure that CCTV is not used within the licensed spaces without parental permission.
- Ensure that CCTV that is used in common areas of services have signs displayed to acknowledge use

Nominated supervisors will:

- Ensure staff understand how to actively supervise children while using technologies at their services.
- Meet staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision.
- Ensure all staff know where to access the *Use of Electronic Devices and Media policy.*
- Have ongoing communication with educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures and legislation, particularly as digital technologies evolve quickly.
- Support educators and staff to uphold the Surf Coast Shires culture of child safety and wellbeing, including when accessing digital technologies and online learning environments.
- Support educators and staff to understand the National Model Code and manage the use of electronic and digital devices at the service, including the service's expectations around the use of personal and service issued devices.
- Implement the National Quality Framework Online Safety Self – Assessment & Risk Assessment Tool with their service staff annually.

When using digital technologies Educators will:

- Comply with current legislation and Service policies.
- Only use service-issued electronic devices to takewhen taking images photos or videos of children while providing education and care.
- Not carry or use any personal electronic devices that can take images or videos (such as tablets, phones, digital cameras, and smart watches) and personal storage and file transfer media (such as SD cards, USB drives, hard drives and cloud storage) should not be in the possession of any person while providing education and care and working directly with children. Any exceptions to this should be for limited, essential purposes that are authorised in writing (or through another means if written authorisation is not reasonably practicable) by the Team Leader of the service, and where that access does not impede the active supervision of children.personal electronic devices that can take or record images of any person while providing education and care and working directly with children, unless for authorised essential purposes such as emergencies, health and family needs or needing to access 'Duo Security App' to log onto Surf Coast Shire Network.
- Personal Smart Watches should only be used for time purposes and not used to check personal messages/emails when working directly with children. Notifications must be turned off if staff wear a smart watch when working with children.

  - o Obtaining parental authorisation to take, use and store images and videos of children

- parent consent to film or photograph their child
- Not share any digital images of children and families without parent permission.
- Know which children are not to be filmed or photographed.

- Ensure COMMS are involved with any media releases
- Implement the Surf Coast Shires culture of child safety and wellbeing, including when accessing digital technologies and online learning environments.
- Ensure active supervision of children when they are using digital technologies, including by monitoring and maintaining staff to child ratios.
- Ensure children participate in decision-making in matters affecting them regarding the safe use of digital technologies and online environments at the service.
- Ensure educators have access to the National Model Code and the services expectations around the use of personal and service issued devices while at the service, and seek guidance when needed from the nominated supervisor or approved provider.

When using digital technology for programming and planning purposes, educators will:

Documentation of children's learning is a requirement of the Education and Care Services National Regulations (regulation 74, 177(1)(a) and 178(1)(a)). Digital photos and videos have become the most common tools used to document children's learning and engagement, and many providers submit these images to families through a range of applications (often restricted for use by authorised persons such as parents and carers) to allow them to view their child's participation in early learning experiences.

Educators will:

- Only use approved platforms to document children's learning, for example Kinderloop and Xplor.
- Ensure families have approved use of this platform on their child's enrolment form
- Obtain parent consent to film or photograph their child for use in the educational program on the child's enrolment form
- Know which children are not to be filmed or photographed.
- Not share any digital images of children and families without parent permission.

Educators must adhere to the following guidelines for use of digital technologies and online environments as part of the educational program within our services:

- Programs must be carefully selected and be suitable to the needs and development levels of each child using various types of technology or media.
- Any films, videos or any other digital programs being used as part of the educational program is to be viewed prior to showing and be documented into the educational program.
- Digital Technology is used to assist in expanding the content of the daily program and build on children's learning and inspire the ongoing and enthusiastic acquisition of knowledge through technology.
- Provide children with access to technology to help develop their computer literacy skills.
- Endeavour to limit experiences involving screen use to those which have an educational component – including movement.
- Electronic devices accessible to children throughout the program must have a password login system managed by educators.
- Programs are chosen that are engaging and age appropriate to children, that support children's natural curiosity for technology within the service   .
- The use of Electronic Devices will be kept to a minimum, respecting service, children and families input.
- Discuss with children the role of screen time in their lives and support them in making healthy choices about their use of screen time for both education and recreation.

- Programs depicting violence eg. graphic news reports will not be shown.
- Children are to view 'G' rated programs only as per the Office of Film and Literature Classification or equivalent body.
- TV programs or videos will only be shown that have positive messages about relationships, family, and life.
- All media will be previewed prior to using any streaming media such as music or videos prior to using it in the classroom.
- Any streaming platform accessed by a personal account cannot be used within the program
- All content will be socially and culturally considerate and appropriate.

- Ensure any films, videos or any other digital programs being used as part of the educational program to be viewed prior to showing and be documented. Will know which children are not to be filmed or photographed.
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- Support children's natural curiosity for technology within the service
- Provide children with access to technology to help develop their computer literacy skills.
- 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 for children.
- Endeavour to limit experiences involving screen use to those which have an educational component – including movement.
- Discuss with children the role of screen time in their lives and support them in making healthy choices about their use of screen time for both education and recreation.
- Model appropriate screen behaviours to the children.
- Encourage the promotion of productive sedentary experiences for rest and relaxation.
- Ensure that an appropriate balance between inactive and active time is maintained each day.
- Not use a screen as a reward or to manage challenging behaviours.
- Not share any digital images of children and families without parent permission.

Use of personal devices

Essential purposes for which use and / or possession of a personal electronic device may be authorised for purposes other than taking images or recording videos of children include:

- communication in an emergency situation involving a lost child, injury to child or staff member, 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 staff 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, only if service issues mobile phone is not available. .
- **Staff should never use a personal electronic device to photograph children, or record audio or visual images of children for any purpose, including to document children's learning**

Programming and Planning

Documentation of children's learning is a requirement of the Education and Care Services National Regulations (regulation 74, 177(1)(a) and 178(1)(a)). Digital photos and videos have become the most common tools used to document children's learning and engagement, and many providers submit these images to families through a range of applications (often restricted for use by authorised persons such as parents and carers) to allow them to view their child's participation in early learning experiences.

Educators will:

- Only use approved platforms to document children's learning, for example Kinderloop.
- Ensure families have approved use of this platform on their child's enrolment form
- Obtain parent consent to film or photograph their child for use in the educational program on the child's enrolment form
- Know which children are not to be filmed or photographed.
- Not share any digital images of children and families without parent permission.

Educators will follow the following gGuidelines for use of digital technologies and online environments as part of the educational program electronic devices within our services:

- Programs must be carefully selected and be suitable to the needs and development levels of each child using various types of technology or media.
- Any films, videos or any other digital programs being used as part of the educational program is to be viewed prior to showing and be documented into the educational program.
- Digital Technology is used to assist in expanding the content of the daily program and current affairsbuild on children's learning and inspire the ongoing and enthusiastic acquisition of knowledge through technology.
- Provide children with access to technology to help develop their computer literacy skills.
- Endeavour to limit experiences involving screen use to those which have an educational component – including movement.
- Electronic devices accessible to children throughout the program must have a password login system managed by educators.
- Programs are chosen that are engaging and age appropriate to children, that support children's natural curiosity for technology within the service .
- The use of TV Electronic Devices will be kept to a minimum., respecting service, children and families input.
- Discuss with children the role of screen time in their lives and support them in making healthy choices about their use of screen time for both education and recreation.
- Endeavour to limit experiences involving screen use to those which have an educational component – including movement.
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- Programs depicting violence eg. graphic news reports will not be shown.
- Children are to view 'G' rated programs only as per the Office of Film and Literature Classification or equivalent body.

- TV programs or videos will only be shown that have positive messages about relationships, family, and life.
- All media will be previewed prior to using any streaming media such as music or videos prior to using it in the classroom.
- Any streaming platform accessed by a personal account cannot be used within the program
- All content will be socially and culturally considerate and appropriate.
- Discuss with children the role of screen time in their lives and support them in making healthy choices about their use of screen time for both education and recreation.
- Model appropriate screen behaviours to the children.
- Encourage the promotion of productive sedentary experiences for rest and relaxation.
- Ensure that an appropriate balance between inactive and active time is maintained each day.
- Not use a screen as a reward or to manage challenging behaviours.
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   Timeframes for screen time will be kept to a minimum.

Children are not to bring their own personal cameras, phones, or electronic devices to the service, unless permission has been provided. Children who have permission to bring these items are responsible for the safety of them at all times.

Supervision

- Educators, and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of child abuse or maltreatment, including abuse or maltreatment that may occur through digital technologies and online environments
- Supervising children when they use digital devices, particularly when accessing an online environment, is very important to keep them safe. Even if an adult is in the same room, they need to actively supervise the child.
- Educators, volunteers and students, take reasonable precautions and use adequate supervision to ensure children are protected from harm that may occur through digital technologies and online environments

Families will ensure that:

- Parents engaged in a centre-based service in any capacity are prohibited using from having personal electronic devices that can take images or video, such as tablets, phones and smart watches, on their person whilst with children.
- They do not take any photos of their child or other children while visiting the service
- Children are not to bring their own personal cameras, phones, or electronic devices to the service, unless permission has been provided. Children who have permission to bring these items are responsible for the safety of them at all times.
- Photos and video recordings of children in Kinderloop are not posted to personal social media platforms.

Students, Volunteers & Contractors

- Anyone who is working or engaged in a centre-based service in any capacity is prohibited from having personal electronic devices that can take images or video, such as tablets, phones and smart watches, on their person whilst with children
- Volunteers and students, take reasonable precautions and use adequate supervision to ensure children are protected from harm that may occur through digital technologies and

online environments

Definitions

Harmful Content   Harmful content includes:

- o   sexually explicit material
- o   false or misleading information
- o   violence
- o   extremism or terrorism
- o   hateful or offensive material.

Illegal Content   Includes:

- o   images and videos of child sexual abuse
- o   content that advocates terrorist acts
- o   content that promotes, incites or instructs in crime or violence
- o   footage of real violence, cruelty and criminal activity

Electronic Device _____ ─Includes but not limited to iPod, iPad, computers, cameras, mp3 players, Gameboy, Wii, Xbox, PSP, mobile phones, video players and TV's and TV's.

Personal Electronic Devices   Includes any device that can take images or videos, such as mobile phones, digital cameras, tablets, smart watches and other new and emerging technologies, where those technologies have image taking or video recording capability. The National Model Code and Guidelines also address use and possession of unapproved / personal storage media devices, for example, an SD card, USB drive, hard drive or use of a cloud-based application which can store images or video recordings

Authorised Essential Purposes – includes emergencies, health and family needs

References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Policies, Work Instructions and Forms
Nil.
MPP-052   Child Safe Organisation
HR24   Code of Conduct
HR02   Working with Children & Criminal History Checks
HR40   Digital & Social Media Policy
MPR-042   Media Liaison Procedure for Council officers
D15/42585   Early Years Staff Code of Conduct Policy
MPP005   Privacy & Data Protection
D22/217989   Early Years Enrolment & Orientation of Children and their families Policy
D15/15724   Early Years Employment of Qualified/Staff and Ratios Policy
D15/33004   Early Years Supervision of Children Policy
D15/32929   Early Years Nappy Changing and Toileting Policy
D15/16337   Early Years Confidentiality, Management and Storage of Records Policy

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Work Instructions and Forms
D17/54211   Child Safe Standards Reporting Form
D23/104577   Early Years Child Safe Code of Conduct – Child Safe Standards
D17/110950   Surf Coast Shire – Child Safe Commitment Statement
D24/112060   Early Years Staff – Incident Report Form

Other References

National Early Years Learning Framework
Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
The Convention on the Rights of the Child
Education and Care Services National Regulations
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2018
ACECQA - National Model Code – Taking images in early childhood education and care 2024
National Quality Frameworks Child Safe Culture and Online Safety Guide 2025
National Quality Frameworks Online Safety Self – Assessment & Risk Assessment Tool 2025
National Quality Standards
Australian Government Department of Health – Australia's Physical and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines
The Australian Council on Children and the Media for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
Office of Film and Literature

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1	Approved	General Manager Culture and Community 1 April 2016
2	Amended	Manager Aged and Family 21 February 2017
3	Amended	Manager community Strengthening 2 November 2018
4	Amended	Manager community Strengthening 1 April 2020
5	Amended	Manager community Strengthening 16 August 2021
6	Amended	Manager community Strengthening 1 February 2023
7	Amended	Manager community Strengthening 30 September 2024