

Safe and Responsible Use of Digital Devices

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Introduction

In today's digitally connected world, the safe and responsible use of digital technologies in early childhood education and care is paramount. Historically our school has actively discouraged the use of 'screens' in our curriculum as we know children need to spend long blocks of time engaged in play, conversations, hands on activities and book sharing. Technology simply does not need to dominate our curriculum and pedagogy. However we do understand we live in a 'plugged in world', therefore we aim to keep children safety and well in any use of technology.

Key considerations for educators, students and volunteers utilising digital devices in the service context include:

- Supporting the implementation of child-safe practices when using electronic devices to capture images or videos of children enrolled in early education and care services.
- Increasing awareness of educators, students, volunteers, and families regarding safety risks associated with using electronic devices in the service and implementing strategies to support child safety.
- Implementing child-safe practices regarding the use of electronic devices across the service context in preparation for the regulatory changes of the Education and Care Services National Law 2010, in line with the National Model Code in response to the Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the NQF, effective on the 1st of September 2025.

Goals / What are we going to do?

Children have the fundamental right to be safe and protected from digital exploitation. All educators have a responsibility to ensure that children's interactions with digital technologies are secure and their personal information and any images or videos used in the service are safeguarded.

Nimbin Preschool is committed to exercising its duty of care, to do everything that is reasonably practicable to avoid potential digital threats and maintain children's right to digital safety and privacy. Our team members will exercise their duty of care by:

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- Creating a safe, supportive, and informed environment where digital technologies can enhance learning whilst prioritising the safety and security of every child in care.
- Establishing a nurturing and secure environment prioritising every child's well-being, safety, and development.
- Committing to fostering a culture of vigilance and care in which all children feel protected, supported, and valued.
- Providing children with the opportunity to maintain their rights and dignity, express their autonomy, and have the right to say no if they do not want their photo or video taken, by asking the children permission.
- Using devices with purpose to enhance learning and support development.
- Recognising that digital technology is a valuable tool when used intentionally with children to extend and support active, practical, creative, and authentic engagement with their surroundings, the community and the world.
- Supporting children to use digital technology, when applicable, with intentionality to inform and educate children on how to safely use digital devices and support children's positive relationships with different forms of technology.

Strategies / How will it be done?

Nimbin Preschool adopts the National Model Code and the accompanying Guidelines developed by ACECQA (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority). These resources will be used in the preschool to implement child-safe practices and enhance awareness of the associated risks and considerations when educators, students, and volunteers use personal and service devices.

To create a digitally safe environment for the children in care, our preschool will:

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- Provide and enforce the use of centre-owned devices for all digital activities involving children.
- Regularly update and maintain these devices with the latest security software and firmware.
- Not permit personal devices for work-related tasks to minimise the risk of data breaches.
- Not permit personal devices in areas where children are educated and cared for, unless it is used for exceptional purposes, as defined by the National Model Code. Staff can use their personal devices in the preschool office with the door shut.
- Develop and enforce strict privacy policies that govern the collection, storage, and sharing of children’s digital information.
- Ensure that all digital content, such as photos and videos, is stored securely and access is limited to authorised personnel only.
- Obtain consent from parents and guardians before capturing or sharing any digital media involving their children.
- Obtain consent from children, whenever possible, before capturing or sharing any digital media involving themselves.
- Avoid sharing children’s images and digital media on online platforms.
- Conduct regular training sessions for staff on digital safety best practices, including recognising and mitigating online risks.
- Provide specific training on the centre’s privacy policies and the proper use of centre-owned devices.
- Keep staff updated on the latest trends and threats in digital safety to ensure they remain vigilant and informed.
- Implement continuous audits of digital device usage to ensure compliance with established policies and procedures.
- Use monitoring software to track and review online activities on centre-owned devices.
- Conduct regular digital content and storage audits to identify and address potential security vulnerabilities.

When children are supported to use digital technology, our preschool will:

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- Ensure age-appropriate, active, and engaging use of technology accompanied by an educator.
- Service the interests of the children and their provocations identified through play.
- Encourage exploratory play and enhance children’s learning using technology.
- Allow children to engage in multimodal use of technology such as images, text, video and audio.
- Offer insight into the role, use, and presence of technology in today’s world.
- Educate children on how to use digital platforms safely. For example, tell children to always communicate with team members and educators if they feel unsafe using digital devices.
- Support a positive relationship with digital technologies and devices, avoiding glorifying and condemning its use in the program.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority / Responsibility For
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply the National Model Code and Guidelines for taking images or videos of Children while enrolled and providing education and care in the service.
Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a ‘Safe and Responsible Use of Service Technology’ statement.• Ensure all educators, students and volunteers adhere to this statement.• Establish and maintain processes for the ongoing monitoring and review of any authorised use of service and personal electronic devices.• Ensure that all related policies, including but not limited to privacy and confidentiality, child-safe environments, child protection, relationships with families and record keeping, are in line with this policy.• Continuously review and update digital safety policies and procedures to keep up with technological advancements and emerging risks.• Establish procedures for the ongoing monitoring and review of personal and centre-owned electronic devices to ensure their use aligns with authorised guidelines and remains appropriate.• Prohibit the use of personal digital devices in spaces where children are being educated and cared for, except in exceptional circumstances. Digital devices include personal smartphones, personal tablets, personal computers and any type of wearable technology with access to recordings, such as smartwatches and AI glasses.• Provide educators, students, and volunteers, with regular training and professional development on digital safety practices, including recognising and mitigating risks associated with digital technologies.• Communicate with families about digital safety practices, involving them in discussions about how digital devices are used within the service and any associated risks.• Establish secure access controls used to manage who can use digital devices and access digital content, ensuring that only authorised individuals can access sensitive information and technology.• Establish protocols for safe online interactions, including supervision of children’s online activities and the use of appropriate filters and monitoring

Role	Authority / Responsibility For
	<p>software.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update software and security measures on all digital devices regularly to protect against viruses, malware, and other cybersecurity threats. Encourage responsible and respectful use of technology to promote a culture of digital responsibility among educators, students, and volunteers. Maintain clear documentation of any digital safety incidents and establish a protocol for reporting and addressing these incidents promptly, as part of the governance duty of care. Establish processes for safe digital record keeping, in line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse; Section 175 of the National Law: Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents; and Regulation 177 of the National Regulations: Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider.
<p>Nominated Supervisor Director</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the approved provider in applying the National Model Code and Guidelines for taking images or videos of children while enrolled and providing education and care in our service. Support the ‘Safe and Responsible Use of Service Technology’ statement by educators, students and volunteers. Ensure all educators, students and volunteers sign and adhere to this statement. Support the approved provider to develop and maintain service policies and procedures. Monitor the prohibition of the use of personal digital devices in spaces where children are being educated and cared for. Digital devices include personal smartphones, personal tablets, personal computers and any type of wearable technology with access to recordings, such as smartwatches and AI glasses, unless for essential purposes. Ensure that all digital safety policies and procedures are effectively implemented and adhered to within the service. Coordinate and provide ongoing training and education for educators, students, and volunteers on digital safety practices, including responsible use of electronic devices and recognising potential risks. Develop effective onboarding programs to ensure educators, students, and volunteers are informed about the safety and responsibility of using service digital devices safely in the centre. Keep families informed about digital safety measures, policies, and any updates or changes. Facilitate regular reviews and audits of digital device usage, ensuring that authorisations are current, and devices are used appropriately and safely. As part of the service’s child-safe practices, encourage a culture of digital responsibility and safety among educators, students, volunteers, children, and families, fostering an environment where all stakeholders understand the importance of digital safety.

Role	Authority / Responsibility For
Early Childhood Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay current with the latest developments in digital safety and cybersecurity and ensure this knowledge is shared with educators, students, and volunteers and incorporated into practice.• Ensure that appropriate access controls, such as passwords and user permissions, are in place to protect sensitive information and limit access to authorised personnel only.• Promptly address digital safety incidents, documenting them accurately and taking necessary actions to mitigate risks and prevent future occurrences.• Provide feedback to educators, students, and volunteers who are found using personal devices during work hours and implement appropriate action for non-compliance of policies and procedures.• Work closely with the approved provider to regularly review and update digital safety policies and procedures, ensuring they remain practical and relevant.• Implement and monitor the processes for safe digital record keeping, in line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Section 175 of the National Law: Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents and Regulation 177 of the National Regulations: Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider.• Keep a register of preschool digital devices as prescribed in the “Education and Care Services (Supply, Authorisation and Use of Devices) Order 2025” November 2025• Adopt the services implementation of the National Model Code and Guidelines for taking images or videos of children while enrolled and providing education and care in the service.• Complete a Child-safe code of conduct that emphasises the importance of child safety in the service, including using digital technologies safely.• Read and acknowledge the ‘Safe and Responsible Use of Service Technology’ statement.• Ensure digital safety when taking photos and video materials and documenting children’s development while avoiding accessing centre information using personal devices during and outside work hours.• Implement locking systems and passcodes on their personal devices for centre applications.• Use preschool-provided cameras or devices only to take photos and document children’s development, never personal devices.• Keep their personal digital devices away from areas where children are educated and cared for, unless it is used for essential purposes. Digital devices include personal smartphones, personal tablets, personal computers and any type of wearable technology with access to recordings, such as smartwatches and AI glasses, unless for essential purposes.• Ensure that written consent is obtained from parents or guardians and children, when applicable, before taking any photos or videos of children using the centre devices.

Role	Authority / Responsibility For
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adhere to the centre’s privacy policies when documenting children’s development, ensuring that images and videos are stored securely and shared only with authorised individuals.• When using photos for a digital outcome, ensure that only the intended child is in the frame or blur other children’s faces to protect their privacy. When using photos for a paper outcome ensure that only children whose parents have given permission are in the images.• Store all photos, videos, and documentation on secure, password-protected devices or cloud services provided by the centre. Regularly back up data and ensure it is accessible only to authorised personnel.• Be prohibited from using personal devices to obtain, access or store centre information.• Utilise only secure, centre-approved platforms and applications for accessing and sharing information. Ensure that these platforms are used exclusively on centre-owned devices.• Comply with regular reminders from your nominated supervisor about the importance of not using personal devices for work-related tasks and the potential risks involved.• Follow clear rules and guidelines that personal devices should not be present in areas where children are being cared for.• The office is the only designated areas where educators, students, and volunteers can use their devices during breaks.• Be provided with secure storage for personal devices during work hours to minimise distractions and prevent unauthorised use.• Lead by example by not using personal devices in the presence of children and encourage a culture of full engagement and attention while interacting with children.• Provide feedback to staff who are found using personal devices during work hours and will face disciplinary action for repeated non-compliance.• Inform nominated supervisor of non-compliance with this policy.• Not be permitted to document or record conversations and information that is private and confidential using personal devices.• Not be permitted to obtain, access and store images and videos relating to educators, students, volunteers, children and families from personal devices.• Educate children in acceptable and unacceptable behaviours (from adults and children) when children use digital devices and engage in digital platforms.• Support children using digital devices to enhance their skills and development while cultivating a positive relationship with digital devices and platforms.

Mentoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety: Standard 2.2, Element 2.2.3
- National Quality Standard, Quality Standard 4: Staffing arrangements
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with children: Standard 5.1, Element 5.1.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership: Standard 7.1, Elements 7.1.2, 7.1.3
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations: <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles>

Related Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: 161, 161A, 162, 162A, 165, 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011: 84, 117A, 117B, 117C, 161, 168, 170, 171, 172, 181, 183
- Australian Child Protection Legislation aifs.gov.au/resources/resource-sheets/australian-child-protection-legislation
- Australian Privacy Principles – www.oaic.gov.au
- Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act) – www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-legislation/the-privacy-act
- Education and Care Services (Supply, Authorisation and Use of Devices) Order 2025 – 6/11/25

Sources

- ACECQA’s Guide to the National Quality Framework – www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide
- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- Policy and procedure guidelines – GUIDELINES FOR THE NATIONAL MODEL CODE - www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/Guidelines%20for%20the%20National%20Model%20Code%20Taking%20Images%20and%20Videos.pdf
- National Model Code - www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/National%20Model%20Code%20FAQS%20-%20Final.pdf
- ECA Code of Ethics (2016) Early Childhood Australia – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- eSafety Commissioner - www.esafety.gov.au/educators/community-education
- ECA - eSafety early years program - learninghub.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/esafety-early-years-program
- NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian - <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/>
- NSW Dept of Education: Guide on the Child Safe Standards for early childhood education and outside school hours care services - education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/early-childhood-education/working-in-early-childhood-education/media/documents/Guide_Child_Safe_Standards.pdf
- (NSW specific) Child Safe Standards: Key messages for early childhood education sector - Fact Sheet - education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/early-childhood-education/working-in-early-childhood-education/media/documents/Child_Safe_Standards_ECE.pdf
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - www.unicef.org.au
- Australian Human Rights Commission – www.humanrights.gov.au
- Australian Centre for Child Exploitation - www.acce.gov.au/help-and-support/what-is-online-child-exploitation
- National Model Code - <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/National%20Model%20Code%20Taking%20Images%20and%20Videos.pdf>

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- NQF Child Safety Changes-
https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-06/InformationSheet_CS.pdf
- Kids Help line – kidshelpline.com.au phone 1800 55 1800
- Parent Line NSW – 1300 1300 52

Role Authority / Responsibility For

Version Control

Last review date	Changes made	Next review date
1/3/2025	Document created	1/3/26
3/9/2025	Updates to the NQF review and National Regulations coming into effect from 01/09/2025.	3/9/2026
15/11/25	Updated after “Education and Care Services (Supply, Authorisation and Use of Devices) Order 2025” – 6/11/25	15/11/2026

Checklist

- Isolated guest access to wifi for staff and parents – it can't lead to access of the computers on the network.
- Password manager set to change passwords every 6 months
- Password for password manager kept secure and only known by those staff who need access to children's files.
- Educators to understand that they are not to access personal emails / social media on preschool devices.
- Separate log-on on preschool devices for general staff so data is not available to everyone.
- Preschool staff to understand that they are not to access preschool data on personal devices unless they've been given the authority to do so and are able to keep their personal devices and network secure.
- Preschool staff to understand that they can only use personal devices in the preschool office except in exceptional circumstances as outlined in National Model Code for Early Childhood Education and Care.
- Preschool devices to be kept up today with all security patches and virus checks performed regularly.
- Third party organisations that the government requires the preschool to use must give proof of their policy to keep wwcc on file for ALL employees.
- Devices accessed by everyone is secured to the general email address not one of the management email addresses.

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Appendix: National Model Code – Taking Images or Videos of Children while providing Early Childhood Education and Care