



## Acceptable Use of Technology, Digital Media, and Devices in Education & Care Settings

### 1. Introduction

Digital technologies and personal devices have become an integral part of many people’s lives, including children. It is important that our educators are familiar with the use of digital technology and personal devices, but are also able to guide children’s understanding of, ability to interact and use appropriately, and learn important life skills and appropriate behaviours to use technology, devices and interact with digital media safely. Technology, devices, and digital media will only be used as an extension to the daily program in each centre, and must demonstrably assist the development of children’s social, physical, emotional. Cognitive, language, and creative potential.

This policy outlines the expectations for all educators of Weldon Children Services and fostering a safe, inclusive, enriching, and high-quality environment for children, families, and staff.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to Weldon Children Services educators, carers, and centre leaders.

### 3. National Quality Standard (NQS) & National Model Code

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, 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
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
181-184	Confidentiality of records and storage of records

NATIONAL MODEL CODE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE	
Part 1	Only service-issued electronic devices should be used when taking images or videos of children while providing education and care. The appropriate use of service-issued electronic devices for taking, sending and storing images or videos of children should be clearly outlined in policies and procedures.

Part 2	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 approved provider of the service, and where that access does not impede the active supervision of children.
Part 3	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• personal health requirements, e.g. heart or blood sugar level monitoring</li> <li>• disability, e.g. where a personal electronic device is an essential means of communication for an educator or other staff member</li> <li>• family necessity, e.g. a worker with an ill or dying family member</li> <li>• technology failure, e.g. when a temporary outage of service-issued electronic devices has occurred</li> <li>• local emergency event occurring, to receive emergency notifications through government warning systems, for example, bushfire evacuation text notification.</li> </ul>
Part 4	Approved providers and their services should have strict controls in place for the appropriate storage and retention of images and videos of children.

## RELATED POLICIES

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



#### **4. Purpose**

Every Weldon education and care service will implement and maintain responsible behaviour when using technology, digital media, and devices. Educators will always act in ways that demonstrate respect for the service, children, families, and the privacy of families and other educators. Educators will exercise appropriate judgement and behave in a professional and ethical manner when using technology, digital media, and devices for educational purposes. At all times, educators will provide a child safe environment and supervise the use of technology, digital media, and devices. This will ensure that educators are of the importance of providing positive role modelling to children, families, schools, and communities.

Personal devices, including the use of mobile phones, and not permitted in any Weldon service, except where otherwise permitted in this policy. The use of personal social media is not permitted in any Weldon services.

Weldon's employees, educators, nominated supervisors, responsible persons, volunteers, or students on placement or practicum are not permitted to carry their personal devices with them at any time during their shift. Mobile devices, including mobile phones and smart watches, must be stored securely in the storage lockers or areas provided by Weldon, at the commencement of each shift.

#### **5. Scope**

This policy applies to children, families, staff, leaders, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, volunteers, students and visitors (including contractors) of the Service.

#### **6. Implementation**

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.

#### **7. Definition 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



Device	An electronic device which can connect to telecommunication networks, internet, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, and/or is capable of recording or storing data in digital formats
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-engage. Incorporates touch sensitive or responsive controls so the user may engage via the screen rather than a mouse or keyboard

## **8. Examples of Technology for Early Childhood Education and Care 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

## **9. Leaders, Management, Nominated Supervisors, Responsible Persons Responsibilities**

- provide professional learning to educators and staff in response to the ECA - Statement on young children and digital technology
- provide professional development, information and resources to educators from the e-Safety Commissioner - Early Years Program
- 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, Office of the Children's Guardian, regulatory authority through NQA ITS portal (see: Child Safe Environment, Child Protection Policies)
- identify technology training needs of educators for professional development
- maintain and promote a positive culture that promotes safe, responsible, and respectful use of digital devices and online services
- reflect on our 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 for privacy levels and safe search settings
- ensure all devices are password protected with access for staff only
- ensure the Service Privacy and Confidentiality Policy is always adhered to by educators
- 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- iPads, printers
- must ensure that no breaches of copyright eventuate if screening/viewing DVDs
- discuss with educators, terms regarding sharing personal data online; ensure children's personal information where children can be identified such as name, address, age, date of birth etc is not shared online.

## **10. Educators Responsibilities**

- 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
- log out of computers and software programs after each use
- only access and modify files and data for which they have authorisation

- respond to and report any breaches and incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services to management
- 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 at the Service, access social media (Facebook, Instagram or other) or breach children and families' privacy
- ask permission before taking photos of children on any device so children begin an understanding of how photos of them can be used and where they will be published
- provide adequate supervision to children when using computers or other technology
- ensure supervision plans are designed so staff are not alone with a child (where possible)
- 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
- ensure children's personal information where children can be identified such as name, address, age, date of birth etc is not shared online

## **11. In relation to Children, Educators Responsibilities**

- consider the developmental levels of children when using technology for early learning
- support children's natural curiosity for technology within the Service
- provide children with access to age-appropriate technologies to help develop their computer literacy skills
- introduce concepts to children about online safety at age-appropriate levels
- only provide programs or apps that they have viewed and assessed prior to introducing to children
- 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
- teach children to 'ask before they tap' or do anything new on a device
- limit experiences involving screen use to those which have an educational component or include movement and gross motor activity



- 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 productive sedentary experiences for rest and relaxation that are not technology reliant
- ensure that an appropriate balance between inactive and active time is maintained each day
- 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

## **12. Guidelines for the Use of Technology, Digital Media, and Devices Within Our Services**

- implement risk management strategies to ensure children are always supervised when using any digital device
- use of digital technologies is used to promote social interactions between children, peers and adults
- programs must be carefully selected and be suitable to the needs and developmental levels of each child using or watching various types of technology or media
- programs and apps will be chosen to support and promote children's cognitive investment
- all online devices have appropriate filtering and monitoring in place with safe settings activated
- all devices are password protected with access for staff only
- postural awareness will be promoted when using devices
- technology is used to assist in expanding the content of the daily program and appropriate current affairs (e.g., the Olympic Games, environmental resources)
- 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
- programs are chosen that are engaging and age appropriate to children: Only 'G' rated television programs and movies will be viewed at the Service
- the use of TV and watching DVD's will be 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

- timeframes for ‘screen time’ according to Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines are:
  - children birth to one year should not spend any time in front of a screen
  - children 2 to 5 years of age should be limited to less than one hour per day
  - children 5-12 years of age should limit screen time for entertainment to no more than 2 hours a day.
- children will be taught responsible concepts of digital use and citizenship as children are ‘growing up digital’
- only quality developmentally appropriate interactive media will be used

**13. In Relation to Families, our Services Responsibilities are:**

- create shared understandings between families and educators about digital technology use, by adults, in front of children
- provide information regarding online safety to families
- provide families with information about the digital technology used within the Service
- request written consent from parents/families to collect and share personal information, images or videos of their children online (Website, Facebook, Instagram or [enter name of parent communication app])
- 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)
- provide information and advice to families about the selection of digital media content, apps and games that are appropriate for use by young 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

**14. Continuous Improvement & Reflection**

Weldon’s Acceptable Use of Technology, Digital Media and Devices Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

**16. Policy Governance**

Policy Created	Approved by	Next Review Date
03/04/25	Interim CEO, 14/05/25	14/05/26