

ECEC POLICY



Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments	Document No:	R 168 2 (h) (i)&(ii)
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Responsible Officer: Early Childhood Coordinator	Version	01
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The City of Greater Geelong is a Child Safe Organisation. We take the wellbeing and safety of children seriously and have zero tolerance for child abuse of any kind.

1. PURPOSE

The City of Greater Geelong ECEC Services have a duty of care for all children attending its Centres. Our practices safeguard children from child abuse and harm and prioritise their safety and wellbeing. We are committed to being a child-safe organisation and this policy outlines expectations for the safe use of digital technologies and online environments to uphold child safety, privacy, and professional conduct in accordance with the National Quality Framework and Child Safe Standards.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, students and visitors to our ECEC centres.

Digital technologies 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 digital technologies, but are able to guide children's understanding of, and ability to interact, engage, access and use a range of digital technology in a child safe environment.

Our focus is to create environments that are age / stage appropriate, educational and child friendly, where children are actively involved in decision making with respect to taking photos, using images and participating in online environments. This policy outlines the responsibilities of all staff in City of Greater Geelong Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services, to monitor the use of digital technologies, to ensure child-safe practices.

Online safety extends to all digital devices used by staff, how and why; devices used by children; and the safe, secure storing and destruction of images.

In line with the **Paramouncy Principle (s2A)** every person involved in delivering our education and care services will ensure that the safety, rights and best interests of children is the **paramount consideration in all their decisions and actions**.

3. REFERENCES

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 – Amended 2017
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – Amended 2017
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
- National Model Code for Taking Images or Videos of Children while Providing Early Childhood Education and Care. (National Model Code)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

- Health Records Act 2001
- Child Wellbeing & Safety Act 2005
- Child Safe Standards 2022 Standard No. 2,4,6,8,9,11

4. ECEC POLICY

IN ALL SERVICES MANAGEMENT WILL:

- ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- embed the 11 Child Safe Standards into the organisational structure and operations.
- ensure that all staff and educators follow the Policy of **no personal devices** in any ECEC Program spaces.
- Provide **service-issued devices** to take images and videos of children for programming and communication with families.
- Ensure **service-issued devices** have a **coded entry** – shared only with program room team members and Service Leadership.
- ensure that the **Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy** and **Guidelines** are implemented, that appropriate risk assessments and action plans are completed, and all identified actions are taken to minimise the risks to children's health and safety.
- Follow the process for any reports made by staff regarding a breach of this policy.
- promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing that underpins all aspects of the service's operations (including online learning environments), to reduce risk to children (including the risk of abuse).
- ensure the safe use of digital technologies, including smart toys, and online environments at the service.
- ensure the safe use of any optical surveillance device at the services have a detailed set of procedures for monitoring, timelines for storage and destruction of content.
- ensure nominated supervisors, educators and staff implement practices that align with the **National Model Code** and the service's child safe practices for the use of electronic and digital devices for taking images or videos of children.
- ensure Policies and Guidelines promote equity and respect diversity for the Esafety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- ensure that nominated supervisors, educators and staff follow the Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policy and guidelines.
- ensure that copies of the policy and guidelines are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators, staff via the ECEC Policy APP & ECEC Leaders Hub.
- ensure that the policy and guidelines are readily available for families to inspect & read over.

- Display **visual signage** to communicate to all visitors and families attending our ECEC Services about no use of personal devices in any Licensed spaces.
- 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.

IN ALL SERVICES, CENTRE MANAGEMENT WILL:

- implement the **Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy** and **Guidelines** and ensure that any plans developed from risk assessments are in place for individual children and are carried out.
- Communicate to Family Services Management about any reports made by staff regarding a breach of this policy.
- Reference the **Guidelines Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments** for the details of implementation, definitions, templates and procedures to be followed by all employees.
- ensure that all staff and educators follow the Policy of **no personal devices** in any ECEC Program spaces. *Refer Guidelines.*
- Provide **service-issued devices** to take images and videos of children for programming and communication with families. *Refer Guidelines.*
- Ensure **service-issued devices** have a **coded entry** – shared only with program room team members and Service Leadership.
- Ensure displayed **visual signage** to communicate to all visitors and families attending our ECEC Services about no use of personal devices in any Licensed spaces is located in key areas where families interact & pass.
- Communicate to families that use of a personal device must end prior to their entering our Program rooms and Licensed spaces. Indicate where they can receive and make calls safely.
- ensure staff understand how to actively supervise children while using digital technologies and avoid distractions (tuning out) caused by digital technology use.
- meet staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision.
- ensure all educators and staff know where to access the Safe use of digital technologies and online environments Policy and Guidelines. ECEC Policy APP.
- have ongoing communication with educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to Policies, Guidelines and legislation, particularly as digital technologies evolve quickly.
- support educators and staff to uphold the service's 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.

- when required, work collaboratively with appropriate services and/or professionals to support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program, including their safe access to online learning environments.

IN ALL SERVICES EDUCATORS WILL:

- implement the **Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy** and **Guidelines** and ensure that any action plans for individual children are carried out
- Reference the **Guidelines Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments** for the details of implementation, definitions, templates and procedures to be followed by all employees.
- implement the service's culture of child safety and wellbeing, including when accessing digital technologies and online learning environments.
- know the individual needs and action plans for the children in your care, and understand how they relate to the safe use of digital technologies and online environments.
- ensure active supervision and engagement with children when they are using digital technologies, including by monitoring and maintaining staff to child ratios.
- recognise and respond effectively to children and young people when discussing the use of digital technologies and online environments, considering diverse needs and interests.
- ensure children and young people participate in decision-making in matters affecting them regarding the safe use of digital technologies and online environments in the program, introducing concepts to children about online safety at age-appropriate levels.
- ensure you understand the **National Model Code** and the service's 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.
- ensure supervision is adequate and layout of rooms designed so staff are not alone with a child and/or can be viewed by others.
- support children's natural curiosity for technology within the Program.
- provide children with access to age-appropriate technologies to help develop their computer literacy skills and monitor children's safe use of digital devices.
- only provide digital programs, apps and online environments that Educators have viewed and assessed prior to introducing to children.
- Limit experiences involving screens 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.
- Use digital technologies and online environments only for professional purposes during service hours (e.g., emergency contact, program planning, documentation, communication with families or coordination unit).

- Ensure all devices and platforms used are secure, password protected and comply with Service / Council privacy policies.
- Report any breaches of this policy or concerns about digital technology misuse to the Centre Manager immediately.
- Participate in training and reflection on digital safety, privacy, and professional boundaries.

IN RELATION TO FAMILIES OUR SERVICE WILL:

- Obtain authorisation from parents to take, use and store images and videos of children being educated and cared for by the Service.
- provide information and advice to families about the selection of digital media content, apps and games that are appropriate for use by young children and share their use within the educational program.
- Provide information to families that use of a personal device must end prior to their entering our Program rooms and Licensed spaces. Indicate where they can receive and make calls safely when they are attending the ECEC Service.
- Provide details of safe storage and timelines on keeping images and secure destruction of images.
- support families to understand that negative effects of exposure to disturbing or arousing content and screens before sleep time.
- educate families around 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.

5. QUALITY RECORDS

See **Guidelines – Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments**

See **Template** – ECEC Centre Photo & Video Permission from families

See **Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy** Regulatory Policy No. 15

- ECEC Educator Handbook. **ECEC TEAM APP.**
- ECEC Leaders Hub **APP**
- City of Greater Geelong – Child Safe Standards Management Policy
- City of Geelong - Child Safe Reporting & Procedures
- City of Geelong – Child Safe Standards Code of Conduct
- Online Esafety RISK ASSESSMENTS

6. ATTACHMENTS

NQF Child Safe Culture Guide ACECQA 2025

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf-child-safe-culture-guide>

National Model Code for Taking Images or Videos of Children while Providing Early Childhood Education and Care. **(National Model Code)**

[National Model Code Taking Images and Videos.pdf](#)

7. REFERENCES

E Safety Checklist for Early Learning Services. esafety.gov.au/early-years

E safety Commissioner – Australian Government.