

Callington Kindergarten: Safe use of digital technologies and online environments procedure

Purpose

This procedure details how we meet our commitment to child safe practices for digital technologies and online environments.

Background

This procedure addresses the requirements of regulation 168 which require an education and care service to have policies and procedures for the safe use of digital technologies and online environments, including the use of mobile devices.

Children and young people have a right to safety and protection at all times, including when being photographed or filmed and when accessing digital devices and technologies at Callington Kindergarten. This procedure is part of the department's obligations and commitment to safeguard children ensuring their safety rights and best interests are of paramount consideration. This procedure builds on the responsibilities and obligations of individuals and early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and programs outlined in the [Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy](#).

A copy of this procedure will be kept in the Callington Kindy Teams Page and in Policy and Procedure folder.

Legislative requirement

In relation to the safe use of digital technologies and online environments, the National Regulations requires services to have policies and procedures for the safe use of digital technologies and online environments (regulation 168) which are compliant with Sections 178A – 178J of the [Education and Care Services National Law](#) – Devices in education and care services and regulation 179A and 179B of the [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#).

This procedure outlines how Callington Kindergarten will implement the [Safe use of digital technologies and online environments in early childhood education and care policy](#).

Procedures

This procedure is clear, specific and accessible to staff and families and available for inspection. It is tailored to Callington Kindergarten's local context and the education and care programs that operate on site and during approved regular local walks.

This procedure applies to staff, relief staff, volunteers, work experience students, contractors, service providers, visitors, families and children at Callington Kindergarten. It also applies during approved regular local walks, excursions and kindergarten activities that occur away from the approved premises.

Electronic devices

Personal electronic devices that can take images of children

Staff and volunteers, including work experience students, external contractors and non-Department for Education service providers working with or providing a service to children at Callington

Kindergarten, are not permitted to have a personal electronic device in their possession or control that can take, store or share images or videos when:

- they are working directly with children
- they are in a space or spaces that are primarily used for children's programs or services when children are in attendance.

Personal electronic devices will be stored in the staff office or another secure location designated by the site leader or responsible person.

Staff and volunteers can use their personal electronic device when they are on an authorised break and in a space not used for children's programs or services, including the office or staff area.

Smart watches or any other device that do not have the capability to take, share or store images or videos can be worn by staff and volunteers at the service. Staff and volunteers are expected to ensure their device cannot take, store or share images or videos while they are working directly with children. The site leader may ask staff or volunteers to demonstrate this where required as a local control measure.

There are limited exceptional circumstances where an employee or volunteer may seek approval in writing from the site leader to be in possession of a personal electronic device which can take images or video, including health needs, disability or urgent pressing necessity.

Where a staff member or volunteer believes their circumstances constitute exceptional circumstances, they can complete the Exemption request - on site possession of a personal electronic device application form for consideration by the site leader. If approval is granted it will be for the stated essential purpose only and the personal electronic device must not be used for other purposes.

Exceptional circumstance applications will be considered on a case by case basis and the criteria for any approval will be consistent with the Safe use of digital technologies and online environments in early childhood education and care policy, the National Model Code and Guidelines and section 175J of the National Law.

In emergency circumstances, such as a child is lost or missing, the site is in lockdown, a site evacuation occurs, or the DfE/site-issued device is unavailable or not working, the site leader or responsible person may give one-off approval for educators to use their personal electronic devices. All approvals and details of the device will be recorded on the essential once-off approvals register after the event.

Callington Kindergarten undertakes regular local walks as part of the approved learning program. The service does not provide child transport. A DfE/site-issued device is taken on regular local walks for child safety, communication and emergency purposes.

For regular local walks or excursions, the site leader may approve a staff member or volunteer to have their personal electronic device in their possession for child safety or emergency purposes. When not required, any approved personal electronic device must be stored securely in a place designated by the site leader or responsible person, for example in the educator backpack during a regular local walk.

The site leader will record this approval and details of the device on the essential planned approvals register. No images or videos of children may be taken, stored or shared on personal devices, and the device can only be used for the approved purpose.

Where staff or volunteers provide emergency contact details, such as their child's school, staff and volunteers are encouraged to provide the service landline number or DfE/site-issued device number, where available.

Parents will be discouraged from using their personal electronic devices when in attendance at the

service. This information will be communicated to parents through enrolment information, family communication, staff reminders and personal device-free area posters where displayed.

Posters will be displayed with the prescribed information and in children's learning areas to alert parents and visitors of the ban on taking photos or videos of children.

Service issued devices

At our service, only service issued devices are to be used to take, store and share images and videos of children. All educators who need digital devices in the course of their work will be provided access to a shared device or a service issued device at the discretion of the site director.

To utilise a shared Windows device, staff members must log in using their EdPass user account. For shared iPads, staff members must sign in and out of the necessary applications as needed.

All staff must read and understand the Department for Education's ICT cyber security standard and sign the ICT Acceptable Use Agreement declaration and complete PLINK Cyber Security Training Course before using service issued devices.

The site leader will maintain a record of all service issued or borrowed devices.

Service issued devices which are used by staff and volunteers for taking, sharing or storing images or videos of children, and/or used in programs with children, must not be used for personal use.

Images and videos of children

Consent from parents to take, use and store images and videos of children

We will obtain parental consent before taking, using, distributing or storing images and videos of their children.

At the time of enrolment parents will be asked to complete the [consent to publish media and creative work of children, students and the community](#). The consent forms will be stored with the child's enrolment record] in accordance with the department's [Information and records management requirements](#).

If parent permission is revoked, every effort will be made to remove relevant media from distribution, however this may not be possible or practical in some situations.

Taking images and videos of children

We believe:

- electronic devices are a useful educational tool to document children's learning
- digital images and videos play an important role in engaging parents in their child's education and care experiences
- children's rights, dignity, privacy, voice and agency must be central when images and videos are taken or used.

We will:

- only take, store or share images or videos on service issued devices
- seek children's consent before taking images or videos wherever possible
- ensure children's privacy, dignity and rights are respected

- ensure that, where possible, another educator or staff member will be present when images are taken
- continue to critically reflect on our use of digital images to ensure that images or videos relate directly to children's learning, development and wellbeing
- be intentional in our approaches to documentation of children's learning
- ensure we prioritise active supervision, interactions and engagement with children in their learning.

Parents of children enrolled in our service and programs will be discouraged from using their personal electronic device while at the service, noting they will not be prohibited from taking an image of their own child, but must not take images of other children, including where their child is part of a group.

Staff will communicate to parents the importance of child-safe environments and explain how the service is implementing the newly introduced legislation to enhance child safety.

If a parent takes images of children, other than their own, we will request that they stop taking images and delete any taken images. If the request is ignored, or the parent becomes offensive or abusive the site leader will lodge a critical incident report. If required we will contact [Conditions for Learning](#) directorate if urgent assistance is required.

Before being granted access to the service visitors, including maintenance contractors, will be asked to agree, as a condition of entry, that they will not take images or videos of children by completing the visitor sign in register.

Visitors including maintenance, contractors may, with the site leader's or delegates permission, take images for approved purposes, such as taking images of site infrastructure to obtain a quote.

Work experience students and volunteers must not take images and videos of children. Where images are required as part of a practicum, additional consent will be obtained from the parent and approval sought from the site leader. Images will be taken on a service issued device by a staff member and the student provided a hard copy of the image.

Inappropriate images and videos of children

Our service will take active steps to ensure the safety, dignity and the rights of a child are respected when taking images or videos and not take any inappropriate images or videos of children. Refer to [Safe use of digital technologies and online environments in early childhood education and care policy](#) for more information.

Service issued devices must not be taken to or used in children's bathrooms or nappy changing areas. In exceptional circumstances, for safety reasons, an educator may use a service issue device in a children's bathroom with leader authorisation. For example, in an emergency, as documented in a child's health support plan.

Parents will be discouraged from sending inappropriate digital images of their child to the service, for example images of a child in distress, a state of undress or showing a rash or injury in a private area. This information will be communicated through enrolment information and family communication.

Using images and videos of children

At Callington Kindergarten, images and videos are not shared electronically with families. Images may be printed and used in the big learning book, children's individual folders, learning displays, planning documentation, assessment and reporting records and internal site documentation.

We use images to:

- create identity and belonging through photo displays of individuals and groups of children
- document and share children's learning through hard-copy documentation
- inform and support assessment and reporting
- support educator reflection, analysis and curriculum planning
- support children's agency by making learning visible and revisitable in the big learning book and children's individual folders
- identify children with additional support, health or medical requirements where this is required for safety and care.

Staff will only distribute messages and content to parents using service issued devices and only to parents of children currently attending the service, who have given required consent. Images and videos of children will not be shared with families through Outlook email, Teams, Frog, SeeSaw, ClassDojo or any other electronic platform.

Storing images of children

In accordance with the [Safe use of digital technologies and online environments for early childhood education and care policy](#) we will only download, access, share or store images or videos using service issued devices on platforms supported and approved by the department, such as Frog, cloud storage or the sites network in accordance with the [ICT cyber security standard](#).

At Callington Kindergarten, the approved site record management location for digital images and videos is OneNote, which is synced to the Callington Kindergarten Teams platform. This is the approved location for digital images and videos used as official records.

We ensure that all image records are regularly backed up to OneNote synced to the Callington Kindergarten Teams platform. Staff will transfer children's images and videos from portable service issued devices to the approved OneNote/Teams record management location regularly and at least once every 2 weeks. Images and videos will be transferred sooner when they form part of children's learning documentation, following a local walk, excursion, special event, incident, or when they are no longer required to remain on the portable device.

All records will be stored in accordance with the [Identifying, creating and managing official records](#) webpage and the [Information and records management for schools and preschools procedure](#).

Staff will not use personal storage and file transfer media such as SD cards, USB drives, hard drives or cloud storage to save, store or share images or have them in their possession while working directly with children.

Destruction of images

All digital records at our site, from creation to disposal, will be managed in accordance with the School and preschool official records webpage and the Information and records management for schools and preschools procedure.

Staff will transfer children's images and videos from portable digital devices to the approved OneNote/Teams record management location at least once every 2 weeks.

The site leader is responsible for ensuring that all records are archived or disposed of securely in accordance with the Operational Records Disposal Schedule at the end of each preschool or school year.

Optical surveillance devices

There are no optical surveillance devices in use at Callington Kindergarten. This includes CCTV,

doorbell or intercom cameras, external security cameras, sleep monitors or any other device that records or monitors children through visual images or video.

Parents, staff and the Governing Council will be consulted before any optical surveillance device is installed at the service. Consultation will include the intended purpose of the device, the location of any camera or monitor, how footage or images would be stored, who would have access, and how the rights, privacy and dignity of children, families and staff would be protected.

Digital devices used by children

Our service believes the use of digital technology sits within a broader learning environment that is play based, where children's learning is dynamic and holistic and where children are active participants in their learning.

Early Childhood Australia's [statement on young children and digital technologies](#) guides our reflection on children's use of digital technologies including considering how digital technologies enhances children's:

- relationships with others
- health and wellbeing
- citizenship and online privacy
- learning through play and intentionality.

We also refer to [selecting and using resources for educational purposes guideline](#) for considerations about the appropriateness of children's use of digital resources within the preschool program.

Educators will limit children's screen time in line with Australian Government [physical activity guidelines](#) by age, which set out recommendations for the maximum amount of screen time for children.

Physical Activity Guidelines

Age of child	Recommended screen time
birth to 24 months	No screen time
24 months to 5 years	Less than one hour a day
5 – 12 years	For entertainment no more than 2 hours a day.

When children are accessing digital technologies and online environments educators will ensure:

- digital devices are integrated as part of the learning program
- programs and software children can access and use are age appropriate
- they vet children's use of social media platforms carefully to avoid inappropriate content, including
- YouTube
- all new apps and games are checked for age and developmentally appropriate content before they are used
- children only access digital technologies in shared spaces and are actively supervised at all times
- where possible they remain in line of sight of other staff members when working with children
- they model the safe use of digital technologies and online environments

- screen time is strictly limited
- they model appropriate use of the internet and software programs
- children are encouraged to use their protective behaviour strategies when feeling unsafe, for example tell a staff member or a trusted adults if they encounter anything that makes them feel uncomfortable, scared or upset

Educators will not:

- provide unrestricted and unsupervised access to the internet and digital devices
- upload personal child information or images and video to AI tools except EdChat
- upload images or video of children to EdChat on personal devices
- use digital devices as a strategy to manage children's energy, engagement or behaviour
- use digital devices in response to weather conditions
- use free apps that pose risks to pop up advertisement and inappropriate content
- place digital devices in areas where educators cannot monitor their use
- pose risks to children's physical health and wellbeing through overuse, strain or eye glare

Children bringing personal electronic devices from home

Due to safety and security risks parents are requested not to bring children's digital devices from home, including smart watches and air tags.

This information will be communicated to families at the time of enrolment through enrolment information and family communication.

The site leader may approve the use of children's digital devices from home for educational or communication purposes such as an augmentative and alternative communication device (AAC) for a child with additional needs or disability. Parents will be encouraged to discuss their child's learning needs and any special considerations at the time of enrolment.

If approval is given for a child to have a digital device, approval will be recorded with the child's enrolment record, individual learning or health support documentation, or another approved site record. Approval may be time limited. If approval is time limited, a parent who is seeking an extension will be encouraged to make an appointment with the site leader to discuss their child's learning needs.

The site leader will check with parents to ensure appropriate parental controls and restrictions are in place on any digital device brought from home to ensure children's safety prior to it being brought to the service.

Working with parents and the community

We believe that parents are children's first and most important teachers. We will work in collaboration with parents to support and promote children's safe use of digital technologies and online environments including:

- consulting with parents, staff, Aboriginal Elders and community knowledge holders about culturally appropriate and safe content
- working with parents to ensure appropriate parental controls and restrictions are in place to ensure online safety on any approved child devices brought from home

- encouraging parents to talk to their children about online risks in an age and developmentally appropriate way
- sharing information with parents about recommended screen time limits in accordance with the Australian Government physical activity guidelines
- informing parents if their child has accessed digital technologies to ensure families can manage screen time
- promoting the availability of useful resources for parents about online safety through newsletters, family communication and the parent handbook.

Useful resources

- [Online safety support](#) – Department for Education
- [how to choose good online content](#) – eSafety Commissioner
- [Media & technology for preschoolers](#) – Raising Children Network

Induction of staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers including work experience students will have current Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect - Education and Care (RRHAN-EC) training and completed any mandated child safety training before commencing at the site to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children.

As part of the service induction process, all staff and volunteers, including work experience students, will have ready access to the Safe use of digital technologies and online environments in early childhood education and care policy and this procedure.

All staff, volunteers and work experience students will be expected to read, understand and adhere to the Safe use of digital technologies and online environments in early childhood education and care policy and this procedure.

Staff and volunteers will be supported to access relevant training relating to the safe use of digital technologies and online environments, including access to relevant Plink online training.

Online safety

Our site will implement the Responding to online safety incidents in South Australian schools guideline in response to any incidents of inappropriate or risky online behaviour by children or adult behaviour targeted at children.

For online safety incidents that involve allegations of staff member misconduct our educators will be guided by the following documents:

- Protective practices for education and care staff and volunteers
- Responding to online safety incidents in South Australian schools guideline
- Child protection policies and guidelines.

The site leader will also report any incidents on the department's incident management system in accordance with the Reporting critical incidents, injuries, hazards and near misses procedure.

Use of AI and emerging technologies

Educators at our site are encouraged to use EdChat, the department's secure generative artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot, as the preferred tool due to its additional safety features.

As a best-practice approach, educators will de-identify information wherever possible when using EdChat. Educators will avoid entering children's names, images, addresses, health information, family details or other identifying information unless there is a clear education or care purpose and the site leader has approved this use.

If educators are using EdChat on a personal device, they are unable to upload images and videos of children.

We will adhere to the Artificial intelligence in schools - use and considerations guidelines before approving the use of any other AI tools. If alternative tools are approved, staff will not enter any personal or identifying information about the site or children. This includes uploading images or video of children.

Educators must not enter personal or identifying information about children, families, staff or the site into external AI tools, including ChatGPT, image generators, video generators or other publicly available AI platforms. This includes names, addresses, images, videos, health information, sensitive information or details that could reasonably identify a child, family or staff member.

If educators are using AI to help with programming and creating learning experiences this will not be done where children are present.

We will limit the use of AI with children to recognised programs such as those focusing on STEM or early language development. Any programs will be age-appropriate, safe and aligned with the principles, practices and learning outcomes described in the Early Years Learning Framework. Educators will ensure children will be closely supervised when accessing tools and toys with AI capability to ensure privacy and data security is maintained.

Procedure creation and revision record

Local procedures must be regularly reviewed and maintained to ensure they remain relevant and up to date with important developments in evidence-based practices on the safe use of digital technologies and online environments.

This procedure will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains current, relevant and aligned with department policy, legislation, child-safe practices and Callington Kindergarten's local context.

The procedure will also be reviewed and updated in response to any changes to the Safe use of digital technologies and online environments in early childhood education and care policy, following any incident or near miss, identification of risks relating to the use of digital technologies and online environments, or advice from the Department for Education or Education Standards Board.

Any revisions to the procedure will be communicated to staff and families, and access to electronic and hardcopies of older versions should be removed.

Version:	3
Approved by site leader:	Alison Hennessy
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Date of next review:	May 2027
Amendments(s):	Nil