

ARMIDALE FAMILY DAY CARE

Safe use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy and Procedure

Related Documentation	
Policy/policies:	Child Protection and Child Safe (including providing a Child Safe Environment); Educational Program and Practice; Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness; Privacy; Social Media; Student and Volunteer
Regulation/s/Standards:	Regulations: 162A; 165; 167; 184; 115; 122; 123; 123A; 124; 165; 166; 168; 169; 170; 171; 172; 175; 176. NQS: 1; 2; 3; 5; and 7
Related procedures:	Artificial Intelligence; Confidentiality; Management of Records; Photo and Camera; Supervision
References	Child Safe Standards 1 – 10; ACECQA; Department of Education Guidelines; Privacy Act 1988; e – safety Commissioner guidelines;
Date Effective:	August 2025
Date for review:	August 2028
Purpose:	Children’s safety and wellbeing are paramount at Armidale Family Day Care (AFDC), including in the use of digital technologies and online environments. AFDC will use its best endeavours to ensure all digital tools are used safely and ethically to support children’s learning and development.
Responsibility:	Approved Provider, Management, Nominated Supervisor, Coordinators, Educators & Families.

Key Information:

AFDC’s Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy has been developed to ensure the safe, ethical and appropriate use of technologies and online environments. It supports the service’s commitment to children’s safety, wellbeing, and learning.

Communication:

In accordance with our commitment to respect, inclusion and continuous improvement, AFDC will maintain secure records of communication with Educators and families.

AFDC's Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy:

- Complies with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, which require services to have policies and procedures for the safe use of digital technologies and online environments.
- Supports children's learning and development through safe and appropriate use of digital tools.
- Ensures the secure management of digital records and communication with families.
- Aligns with the service's philosophy, which values respectful relationships, inclusion, and continuous improvement.
- Promotes digital practices that protect children's rights, safety, and privacy.

Principles:

All decisions and actions of Armidale Family Day Care regarding the use of digital technologies and online environments are guided by the following principles. These principles reflect our commitment to child safety, inclusion, respectful relationships, and cultural responsiveness:

- Children's safety and wellbeing are paramount and extend to the safe and ethical use of digital technologies and online platforms.
- A strong child safe culture is embedded in all aspects of the service, including digital environments.
- Children are recognised as capable individuals and are actively involved, where appropriate, in decisions about how digital technologies are used, particularly around taking, using, and sharing images or videos of them.
- Educators, staff, and students understand their roles in identifying and responding to risks of harm, including abuse or maltreatment that may occur through digital technologies or online interactions.
- Reasonable precautions and active supervision are used to protect children from harm when using digital devices or online environments, in line with regulatory requirements and duty of care.
- Procedures to manage and respond to incidents involving digital technologies are in place and reviewed regularly.
- The service adopts a partnership approach with families, especially where children bring their own devices, ensuring shared understanding and clear expectations about device use, supervision, and safety.
- The physical environment and Educator practices support safe device use through thoughtful supervision, designated areas, and consistent application of service expectations.
- Optical surveillance devices, such as CCTV, may be used to enhance safety and security, monitor entrances, and protect children and Educators. Cameras are only to

be placed in common areas such as play spaces and never in private spaces like bathrooms.

- AFDC sets clear expectations for Educators and staff regarding the safe and respectful use of all electronic and digital devices.
- Ongoing professional development and critical reflection ensure continuous improvement in digital safety practices, aligned with our broader commitment to quality education and care.

Induction and Ongoing Training:

All appointed managers, coordinators and Educators at Armidale Family Day Care receive comprehensive induction training that includes the safe use of digital technologies and online environments. AFDC will provide ongoing professional development and resourcing to ensure all stakeholders are aware of emerging digital safety issues, best practices and regulatory requirements. This includes, but is not limited to refresher courses, newsletters and relevant resources. AFDC believes that continuous learning supports the confident and effective implementation of this policy and the maintenance of a child safe digital environment while fostering positive, respectful use of technology within AFDC.

Procedure:

AFDC will:

- Prioritise children's safety by embedding safe digital technology use in the service culture.
- Ensure digital and online learning environments support children's wellbeing and safety.
- Conduct risk assessments for digital technologies, incorporating them into the child safe risk assessment.
- Review risk assessments annually and after any incidents, updating action plans as needed.
- Implement precautions to protect children's safety, health, and privacy when using digital devices.
- Communicate clearly with children and families about digital technology use in culturally appropriate ways.
- Encourage Educators to manage children's screen time in consultation with families and in consideration of their educational program.
- Maintain accessible and up-to-date cyber security procedures.
- Use the National Model Code as guidance for electronic and digital device use at the service.
- Ensure written consent is obtained from families before taking, using, or storing children's images or videos.

- When disposing of photos and videos, ensure complete destruction—such as cross-cut shredding printed copies and permanently deleting digital files, including emptying recycle bins and removing from cloud storage.
- Involve children in decisions about their images and explain consent and privacy in an age-appropriate way.
- Store and manage images and videos securely, limiting access to authorised staff only.
- Regularly review policies and procedures, informing Educators and families of any changes.
- Use optical surveillance devices responsibly, such as CCTV, respecting privacy and complying with laws.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Roles	Responsibilities
Approved provider	• To use their best endeavours to ensure that: - obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met - the Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policy and procedures are implemented, the appropriate risk assessments and action plans are completed, and all identified actions are taken to minimise the risks to children’s health and safety - a culture of child safety and wellbeing underpins all aspects of the service’s operations (including online learning environments), to reduce risk to children (including the risk of abuse) - the safe use of digital technologies, including smart toys, and online environments at the service are promoted - 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 - policies and procedures promote equity and respect diversity for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people - reasonable steps are taken to ensure that nominated supervisors, Educators and staff follow the Safe use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments policy and procedures - copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, Educators, staff, families, and are available for inspection • To notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: - affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or - significantly impact the service’s education and care of children or

	- significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.
Nominated Supervisor	• To implement the Safe use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments policy and procedures and ensure that any plans developed from risk assessments are in place for individual children • To ensure Educators understand how to actively supervise children while using digital technologies • To meet Educator to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision • To ensure all Educators and staff know where to access the Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments policy and procedures • To have ongoing communication with Educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures and legislation, particularly as digital technologies evolve quickly • To support Educators and staff to uphold the service's culture of child safety and wellbeing, including when accessing digital technologies and online learning environments • To 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, to 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.
Educators	• To implement the Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policy and procedures and ensure that any action plans for individual children are carried out • To implement the service's culture of child safety and wellbeing, including when accessing digital technologies and online learning environments • To be aware of 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 • To ensure active supervision of children when they are using digital technologies, including by monitoring and maintaining staff to child ratios • To recognise and respond effectively to children and young people when discussing the use of digital technologies and online environments, considering diverse needs and interests • To ensure children and young people participate in decision-making in matters affecting them regarding the safe use of digital technologies and online environments at the service • To ensure understanding of the National Model Code and the service's expectations around the use of personal and service issued devices while at the service, seeking guidance when needed from the nominated supervisor or approved provider.
Families	• To understand and support the service's digital safety policy and procedure.

	• To communicate concerns or incidents related to their child’s digital use. • To provide consent and guidance for the use of their child’s images and information. • To collaborate with Educators to promote consistent digital safety messages. • To encouraging their child’s participation in decisions about digital technology use at the service.
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Monitoring, evaluation and review

AFDC will regularly monitor and review this policy and procedure in consultation with Educators, families, and stakeholders within set timeframes, after any incident, or when legislative changes occur. All updates will be documented, communicated to Educators and families, and previous versions will be removed from all access points to maintain accurate records.