

ARMIDALE OUT OF SCHOOL CARE

Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy

Related Documentation Policy/policies:	Child Protection & Child Safe (including providing a Child Safe Environment) Child Safe Code of Conduct, Educator Assistant, Educational Program & Practice, Enrolment & Orientation, Family Code of Conduct, Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness, Privacy, social media, Student and Volunteer.
Regulation/s/Standards:	Regulations: 162A, 165 - 172, 184, 12, 73, 76, 84, 123A, 124, 123, 123A, 124, 175, 176. National Quality Standard Areas: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7.
Related procedures:	Artificial Intelligence, Confidentiality, Deregistration, Management of Records, Marketing, Photo and Camera, Relief Care, Supervision
References	Child Safe Standards 1 – 10; ACECQA, Department of Education, Privacy Act 1988, ECA, e – safety Commissioner, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.
Date Effective:	November 2025
Date for review:	November 2028
Purpose:	Children’s safety and wellbeing is paramount at Armidale Out of School Hours Care including in the use of digital devices and online technologies.
Responsibility:	Approved Provider, Management, Nominated Supervisors, Responsible Person, Educators and Families.

Key Information:

Armidale Out of School Hours Care 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.

Armidale Out of School Hours Care will ensure that all digital devices used in the service are service provided devices and are used safely and ethically to support children’s learning and development.

Armidale Out of School Hours will not capture, share or store images of children except in accordance with Armidale Out of School Hours policies and procedures.

Responsibilities

The Approved Provider:

- Must ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
- Must take reasonable steps to ensure that Nominated Supervisors, Responsible Persons, Educators and families comply with the Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments policy.
- Must ensure that copies of the Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments policy are readily accessible to Nominated Supervisors, Responsible Persons, Educators and families, and are available for inspection.
- Must endeavour to ensure that Educators understand their role in identifying and responding to risk of harm, including abuse that may occur through digital technologies or online interactions.
- Will ensure that 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).
- Will ensure that Nominated Supervisors, Responsible Persons, Educators and staff implement practices that align with current legislative requirements and the service's child safe practices for the use of electronic and digital devices for taking images or videos of children.
- Will provide ongoing professional development and resources to ensure all stakeholders are aware of digital safety issues, best practices and regulatory requirements.
- Will ensure that policies and procedures promote equity and respect diversity for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Will ensure that software programs which require additional background checks, such as CCS software are only accessed by authorised by management, staff and Educators.
- Must inform the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) in the event of a possible data breach by using the Notifiable Data Breach Form.
- Must 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.

Management, Nominated Supervisors and Responsible Persons

- Must implement the Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments policy.
- Must ensure all Educators know where to access the Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy.
- Must endeavour to ensure that Educators understand their role in identifying and responding to risk of harm, including abuse that may occur through digital technologies or online interactions.
- Must ensure all families are aware of this Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy and are able to access it.

- Must record all Armidale Out of school hours care service provided devices, and update this record when devices change.
- Must ensure that all service devices are password protected and have restricted access.
- Must maintain accessible and up-to-date cyber security procedures.
- Must ensure that families are informed, upon enrolment about how Armidale Out of School hours care will capture, store and destroy images and videos of children enrolled.
- Must ensure written consent is obtained from families before taking, using, or storing children's images or videos.
- When disposing of photos and videos, must ensure complete destruction—such as cross-cut shredding printed copies and permanently deleting digital files, including emptying recycle bins and removing from cloud storage.
- When required, to work with appropriate service providers to support children's inclusion and participation in the Armidale Out of School Hours Care program.
- Must regularly review policies and procedures, informing Educators and families of any changes.

Educators:

- Must implement the Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy.
- Must not take any personal digital devices into the care environment.
- Must only use service provided devices to capture and store images of children in care.
- Must implement the service's culture of child safety and wellbeing, including when accessing digital technologies and online learning environments.
- Must ensure that children's personal information such as name, address, date of birth, etc. is not shared online.
- Must ensure that families have provided written consent before capturing, using or storing children's images or videos.
- Must ensure children are recognised as capable individuals and are actively involved, where appropriate, in decisions about how digital technologies are used, particularly around taking, using or sharing images and videos of them. Educators should explain consent and privacy in an age-appropriate manner.
- Must ensure understanding of Armidale Out of School Hours Care policies and procedures and the service's expectations around the use of personal and service approved devices within the care environment, seeking guidance when needed from the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider when necessary.
- Must formulate a risk assessment relating to the use of digital technologies and online environments.
- Must notify the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor in the event of a possible data breach. This could include:
 - A device containing personal information about children and/or families is lost or stolen,
 - A data base with personal information about children and/or families is hacked, or
 - Personal information about a child is mistakenly given to the wrong person.
- When disposing of photos and videos, must ensure complete destruction—such as cross-cut shredding printed copies and permanently deleting digital files, including emptying recycle bins and removing from cloud storage.

Families

- Should read, understand and agree to abide by Armidale Out of School Hours Care's Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy.
- Should provide written consent and guidance for the use of their children's images upon enrolment.
- May revoke permission for their children's images, in writing, at any time.
- Must ensure that they do not take photos on their personal devices when in the care environment.
- Must ensure that children do not bring personal electronic devices into the care environment; this includes phones, iPad's, tablets, laptops and smart watches that can take photos or record videos.

Armidale Out of School Hours Care Software Programs

Armidale Out of School Hours care uses a range of software programs on our service-issued computers, laptops, iPads and phones.

These programs are used to:

- Monitor and support the provision of early childhood education and care,
- Engage with the Family Assistance Office and the Child Care Subsidy system,
- The administration of management, family, child and educator records, and
- Accounting and Human Resource software.

Management, Nominated Supervisors, Responsible Persons and Educators have completed national screening checks in accordance with the Family Assistance Law.

Access to all software systems is password protected, each user has an individual user account, secure log in and passwords, which are updated regularly.

Virus protection, as recommended by our IT consultants, is maintained on Armidale Out of School Hours Care service devices.