

From policy to practice: Working through children's digital safety in ECEC

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Introduction



This workbook is for teams and individuals in ECEC wanting to think through how they put children's digital safety policies into practice. Through real life scenarios, readers of this workbook are guided to explore their own policies, mindsets and practices, that are designed to be interactive, engaging, and memorable. As a learning method, role play and scenario discussion can boost memory retention, connecting your learning to specific situational cues as well as strengthening problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Our hope is that when faced with real life situations, you'll feel better able to quickly and confidently draw on your knowledge, keeping children's digital safety at heart.

We note that not every scenario may apply to your service or the type of care you provide and that some situations may occur more frequently than others in real life.

Note: This workbook is not intended for services wanting to undergo comprehensive risk assessment - for that, we recommend working through [ACECQA's NQF Child Safe Culture Guide | Self-assessment and risk assessment tool](#) and [NQF Online Safety Guide | Self-assessment and risk assessment tool](#).

The content of this workbook

The content of this workbook has been developed by Storypark's team of pedagogical experts with best practice advice from the [NQF Online Safety Guide](#) and [National Model Code guidelines](#) in mind. A comprehensive list of references can be found at the end of this workbook.

Getting started with this workbook

Each section of this workbook includes a scenario that may occur in an ECEC context along with questions for consideration and discussion. Use the lined spaces to note your responses, thoughts and questions. You may also want to note which of your existing policies are relevant to the situation or any gaps you've identified.

Each scenario and discussion space is followed by notes for teams who'd like support to begin critical reflection. There is also space at the end of this workbook to add in additional scenarios that may be relevant or particular to your organisation's needs, culture and setting.

Introduce these scenarios in ways that work best for your team. Here are a couple of suggestions for how teams could use them:

- Establish a regular staff meeting agenda item to work through one scenario each time as a group.
- Set up a workshop, breaking your team up into smaller groups and assign each a scenario to work through, then share back with everyone.

If working through this as a team, establish a safe space before beginning. This will allow everyone to confidently put forth ideas, receive feedback, and learn without real-world consequences.

Child safe environments are characterised by a resolution to continuous improvement. Our hope is that this workbook is a provocation for further rich discussions, reflections and actions that strengthen your ongoing commitment to children's safety.

Note: When we refer to educators we also mean teachers, globally we want to honour both.



Scenario one:

Purchasing service devices

Sally works as a centre manager at a five-room service for children from babies through kindergarten/preschool. The service caters for 85 children each day.

Sally has been tasked with buying new devices for her service. Educators will use the devices to take images, document learning, record routines and incidents, and as a sign-in tool for families. The devices will be room specific, will be used in both indoor and outdoors and shared amongst the educators in its respective room.

Sally has concerns about some of her educators who are not as tech savvy as others. She doesn't really use much technology herself, and is not sure what is needed. She is also aware that new devices will require a change to policy and procedures. Sally is also wondering how she can keep track of all the devices and feels a responsibility to ensure this is done well.

Discussion and critical reflection

What issue(s) stand out to you initially reading through this?

What policies and procedures would you expect to guide you in a situation like this?

What environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets (where relevant) could help?

How does this relate to legislation?

What actions will you/your team take?

Guidance for your discussion and critical reflection on scenario one

Critical reflective questions that might be raised reading this scenario

- How do we ensure we purchase devices that meet educators' requirements?
- What budget is put aside for this purchase, and how often do we need to update devices?
- What processes do we have (or need to put in place) to ensure devices are used appropriately?
- Do I have the knowledge and skills to add systems to the devices to monitor and control usage and apps?
- How does the IT department need to be involved? If you don't have an IT department, who are the people within your team who will be involved?
- How do I monitor the storage of images once set up? What is appropriate?
- If part of our practice, how do our procedures support children using the devices safely?
- Are tablets needed, or will smartphones be enough to capture learning and make it more manageable and less intrusive?
- What changes need to be made to policies, procedures or job descriptions?
- How would we ensure the safe storage of devices during the day and outside of opening hours?

Policies and procedures that you might expect to guide you

- Code of conduct or professional standards
- Risk assessment policy
- Child safe policy
- Digital media policy
- Interactions with children policy
- Governance and management policy
- Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policy
- Information and communication technologies security and information management policy

Environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets that could help

- Be clear about the expectations and reasons for using service-issued devices
- Have IT support (where possible) and training provided for the whole teaching team
- Create a contact procedure for device troubleshooting so the steps to get help are clear
- Have a central place in the room/service where service-issued devices are kept during the day when not in use - this helps you find them quickly when needed

- Log out of all apps on devices before charging
- Implement strong screen locks to gain access to devices and have individual logins for apps
- Have a safe, locked place in the service where service-issued devices are kept outside of hours
- Reach out to other local providers and see what they are using and what is recommended
- Install operating system and application updates within 48 hours of release
- Consider creating an educator user agreement to support best practice use of devices

Relating to regulation and standards

NQS 2.2 Each child is protected at the service

NQS 7.1 A statement of philosophy guides service operations, and systems are in place to manage risk

Regulation 168 states that ECEC services must have policies and procedures for providing a child-safe environment, including the safe use of online environments

Regulation 170 relates to steps taken to ensure policies and procedures are followed

Child Safe Standards: 2, 8, 10



Scenario two:

Storage and retention of images

Nathan is the educational leader at a five room service. He has eight hours in the office each week, as well as supporting in rooms where lead educators have stepped out for programming for one to two hours per day. He is in each room regularly looking at programming and reviewing documentation.

As part of his non-contact role, he is responsible for checking all devices to ensure that educators follow the policies and procedures around regularly removing images from the devices. The policy states that images should only be kept for a maximum of one month.

When Nathan checks one of the devices, he finds hundreds of photos, including many near-duplicates taken in a series. Looking at the date stamps, some are also over a month old.

Discussion and critical reflection

What issue(s) stand out to you initially reading through this?

What policies and procedures would you expect to guide you in a situation like this?

What environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets (where relevant) could help?

How does this relate to legislation?

Turning reflection into action - what is next for you/your team?

Guidance for your discussion and critical reflection on scenario two

Questions that might be raised reading this scenario

- What guidelines are in place for educators taking images? How are we managing the taking of images to ensure they are useful, meaningful and appropriate? How does the taking of photos align with our philosophy?
- What could be the barriers to removing the images regularly from the devices? Do educators understand the importance of managing the images on devices?
- What do we do if the photo might be the beginning of an interest for a child but we aren't ready to write a story yet?
- What timeframe is appropriate for removing images, keeping educators' non-contact time in mind?
- What next steps could the educational leader take if someone is not following the established policy?

Policies and procedures that you might expect to guide you

- Code of conduct or professional standards
- Educator user agreement (if this has been introduced)
- Digital media policy
- Governance and management policy
- Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policy
- Information and communication technologies security and information management policy

Your child safety policy and procedure needs to have specific reference to:

- The taking, using and storing of children's images
- Which roles are responsible for the deletion of images on devices
- How long images are to be kept
- Processes for storing images for purposes outside documentation, and when this is appropriate

Your digital safety policy or social media policy should include a time frame that images are kept for, taking into consideration if they are/are not used in documentation.

Environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets that could help

- Have a displayed, written process detailing daily use guidelines of service devices so everyone is reminded of their role
- Educators are aware that in taking an image, it can remove them from the learning moment, or even distract children from the learning moment
- The teaching team works together to support each other in maintaining a child safe approach to taking and storing images

Relating to regulation and standards

NQS 1.3 There is a planned and reflective approach to the program

NQS 2.2 Each child is protected at the service

NQS 7.1 A statement of philosophy guides service operations, and systems are in place to manage risk

NQS 7.2 The educational leader leads the development and implementation of the educational program

Regulation 118 states that ECEC services must have a designated educational leader

Regulation 148 states that the staff record must show who the educational leader is

Regulation 168 states that ECEC services must have policies and procedures for the use of digital technologies and online environments

Regulation 170 relates to steps taken to ensure policies and procedures are followed

Child Safe Standards: 1, 5, 7, 8, 10



Scenario three:

Personal device use

Jing has just come outside to support with supervision, as there is now a large group of children in the outside space with only one educator supervising them.

She notices Debbie, another educator outside, looking at what might be her personal phone. When she sees Jing, Debbie quickly puts the phone in her pocket and does not address what happened.

Discussion and critical reflection

What issue(s) stand out to you initially reading through this?

What policies and procedures would you expect to guide you in a situation like this?

What environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets (where relevant) could help?

How does this relate to legislation?

Turning reflection into action - what is next for you/your team?

Guidance for your discussion and critical reflection on scenario three

Questions that might be raised reading this scenario

- Before jumping to conclusions, what contextual information do we need to know if there is a suspected breach of policy?
- Is the policy about personal device use within the service clear, and are there any gaps? What are the guidelines? Where and when are educators allowed to use their devices at the service?
- How are we providing guidance about the use of a personal device during staff induction? How are we regularly communicating with staff about the policy or guidelines?
- What is the procedure for reporting a breach of policy? Are educators aware of their responsibilities in this situation? How do we ensure a culture of disclosure to protect both children and educators?

Policies and procedures that you might expect to guide you

- Code of conduct or professional standards
- Child safe policy
- Digital media policy
- Governance and management policy
- Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policy
- Information and communication technologies security and information management policy
- Supervision policy and plan

Educator user agreements need to be explicit about not using personal devices in children's spaces. It needs to also explain where personal devices can be stored safely and when they can be used.

Have clear guidelines for reporting procedure breaches and consider whistleblower protections.

Environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets that could help

- Provide and promote safe spaces and time for use of personal devices
- Posters displayed in non-contact spaces to remind educators of appropriate device use and display your commitment to children's safety prominently
- Clear communication from management when a personal phone is allowed to be with an educator and why
- A culture of disclosure and honesty to support child safety and meeting the requirements of the policies and procedures
- Provide continued support and training for the use of service-issued devices, keeping in mind, users may not be familiar with the devices you have

Relating to regulation and standards

NQS 2.2 There is adequate supervision of children at all times

NQS 4.2 All staff are required to uphold respectful and ethical professional standards

NQS 7.1 Systems must be in place to manage risk, and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood

Regulation 168 states a service must have policies and procedures relating to the use of digital technologies and online environments

Regulation 170 relates to the policies and procedures being followed

Child Safe Standards: 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10



Scenario four:

Querying a reduction in images

A service has decided to audit the number of images taken and used in their documentation, inspired by the National Model Code.

Based on the audit results, they decided to reduce daily reports to families to a weekly cadence and reduce the number of images of children for all types of stories, focusing on the experience and learning to reduce the number of photos where the child could be identified.

Since this change, Kim, a parent, has asked one of the educators why there are no more daily online photo updates of their child, and that there are far fewer photos in their child's observations now.

Discussion and critical reflection

What issue(s) stand out to you initially reading through this?

What policies and procedures would you expect to guide you in a situation like this?

What environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets (where relevant) could help?

How does this relate to legislation?

Turning reflection into action - what is next for you/your team?

Guidance for your discussion and critical reflection on scenario four

Questions that might be raised reading this scenario

- What is the role of images in our documentation, and how have we shared this with families at enrolment and/or throughout their time with us?
- How do we balance regulatory requirements and parent expectations?
- How do we ensure that parents are informed and can provide feedback on any future changes?
- How do we ensure we clearly communicate change with the diverse needs of our families, who may prefer a range of communications styles?
- What other ways are available to us to include parents in what has been happening in their child's day?

Policies and procedures that you might expect to guide you

- Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policy
- Information and communication technologies security and information management policy
- Child safe policy
- Risk assessment policy and procedure
- Online safety policy
- Documentation or educational program policy
- Digital media policy
- Communication with families policy

Environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets that could help

- Take and share images in a thoughtful way, thinking about what's helpful to support the story of learning
- Use a variety of ways to share children's day, such as making time to talk with parents, a digital photo display, whiteboard notes etc
- We have a responsibility to communicate with families about changes that affect them and their children and explain the reasons why. We can also make ourselves available to families to talk through those changes

Relating to regulation and standards

NQS 1.3 Families are informed about the program and their child's progress

NQS 4.2 Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships

NQS 6.1 Families are supported to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions

Regulation 74 outlines documentation requirements

Regulation 75 relates to the availability of educational program information

Regulation 76 states that information about a child's development and participation in the program must be shared with their guardians on request

Child Safe Standards: 1, 3, 8, 9, 10



Scenario five:

Parent taking photos at an event

A centre is holding a family event. During the course of the event both Diane, an educational leader and Anushka, an educator, notice that many family members have their phones and are taking pictures of the activities they have set up.

Once the event has started, they also begin to take photos of their children participating in the activities, sometimes those also include other children.

Discussion and critical reflection

What issue(s) stand out to you initially reading through this?

What policies and procedures would you expect to guide you in a situation like this?

What environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets (where relevant) could help?

How does this relate to legislation?

Turning reflection into action - what is next for you/your team?

Guidance for your discussion and critical reflection on scenario five

Questions that might be raised reading this scenario

- How do we communicate our policy on taking images whilst at the service to families? What information is provided? How do our policies support this?
- How do we manage photography on the day of the event? Are there circumstances when a family member would be allowed to take a photo?
- Who is responsible for speaking to families if someone sees them taking photos at the centre?

Policies and procedures that you might expect to guide you

- Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policy
- Information and communication technologies security and information management policy
- Incursion and centre events policy
- Centre visitors policy
- Child safe policy
- Event policy
- Code of conduct or professional standards
- Risk assessment policy and procedure

Environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets that could help

- Visual aids, such as posters, are prominently displayed in the centre to let families know expectations and encourage a sense of shared responsibility for children's safety
- Include photography guidelines in event invitations
- Include image taking guidelines during family induction and a clear statement around image taking in the parent handbook
- Educators assume responsibility for documenting events and sharing any images with families appropriately
- We all have a responsibility to ensure people aren't taking photos of other people's children
- Talk with the children about who can take photos at the event

Relating to regulation and standards

[NQS 2.2](#) There is adequate supervision of children at all times, and each child is protected

[NQS 4.2](#) All staff are required to uphold respectful and ethical professional standards that guide their interactions

[NQS 6.1](#) Families are supported to be involved in the service and respectful relationships are developed

[NQS 7.1](#) Systems must be in place to manage risk, and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood

[Regulation 168](#) states that ECEC services must have policies and procedures for providing a child-safe environment, including the safe use of online environments

[Regulation 170](#) relates to steps taken to ensure policies and procedures are followed

[Child Safe Standards](#): 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10



Scenario six:

Excursion planning and risk assessment for device use

Avi is organising a whole centre excursion to the zoo.

All educators from the centre's five rooms will be part of the trip, and there will need to be parent volunteers to make up the ratios required to meet the policy requirements. While there is a centre mobile phone, the other centre devices are not able to be used without Wi-Fi, and there is no Wi-Fi connectivity at the zoo.

Educators will be in small groups going around the zoo, so it is important to stay connected. Avi is considering asking educators and parents to use their personal devices to maintain communication while at the zoo. She wants to ensure there is communication between the group, but also that the policies around using personal devices are also maintained.

Discussion and critical reflection

What issue(s) stand out to you initially reading through this?

What policies and procedures would you expect to guide you in a situation like this?

What environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets (where relevant) could help?

How does this relate to legislation?

Turning reflection into action - what is next for you/your team?

Guidance for your discussion and critical reflection on scenario six

Questions that might be raised reading this scenario

- What options are there to maintain communication amongst the groups while ensuring regulatory responsibilities are met? How are these supported by policy?
- How can communication be included in risk assessments for the excursion?
- What steps can be taken to ensure appropriate use of phones by educators and volunteers? How do we communicate this with families?
- What devices could be used to capture the learning on the excursion?

Policies and procedures that you might expect to guide you

- Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policy
- Information and communication technologies security and information management policy
- Child safe policy
- Risk assessment policy and procedure

The user agreement with educators should have a section on excursions and personal devices to ensure appropriate usage is explicit.

The excursion policy should cover the use of personal devices while out of the centre, with direct reference to what educators can and can't do while on the excursion. For example, only taking photos on a centre device.

Environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets that could help

- Excursion risk assessment could have space for each personal device's number for
- contacting if needed, which is shared with all team members
- Parents are advised of expectations on the trip including those around using their own phone

Relating to regulation and standards

[NQS 2.2](#) There is adequate supervision of children at all times, and each child is protected

[NQS 4.2](#) All staff are required to uphold respectful and ethical professional standards

[NQS 6.1](#) Families are supported to be involved in the service, and respectful relationships are developed

[NQS 7.1](#) Systems must be in place to manage risk, and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood

[Regulation 98](#) states ECEC services must always have access to telephone or similar means of communication to allow immediate communication with families and emergency services

[Regulation 99](#) relates to children leaving ECEC services

[Regulation 100](#) states that risk assessments must be conducted prior to excursions

[Regulation 101](#) outlines requirements for risk assessments for excursions

[Regulation 168](#) states that ECEC services must have policies and procedures for providing a child-safe environment, including the safe use of online environments

[Regulation 170](#) relates to steps taken to ensure policies and procedures are followed

[Child Safe Standards](#): 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10



Scenario seven:

User management of digital platforms and software

Manjula's ECEC service has a social media account they use to communicate with families and share photos of children at the centre.

Fiona, an educator, recently resigned and left Manjula's service. The week following Fiona's final shift, a new post was shared on the services social media account that didn't align with their usual practice for posting. All current team members denied sharing the post. After some investigation, Manjula realised Fiona must have shared the post using the shared centre login and password.

Discussion and critical reflection

What issue(s) stand out to you initially reading through this?

What policies and procedures would you expect to guide you in a situation like this?

What environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets (where relevant) could help?

How does this relate to legislation?

Turning reflection into action - what is next for you/your team?

Guidance for your discussion and critical reflection on scenario seven

Questions that might be raised reading this scenario

- Why would login details be shared and used by multiple people? How could this be managed and monitored? How often and when should passwords be updated?
- Is social media the best platform for their purpose? How could the team consider the implications of using social media regarding compliance with the child safe guidelines (e.g. a risk assessment)?
- What are the offboarding procedures when educators leave? How is access to digital technologies included in this procedure? Does the procedure include removing access to online and physical spaces (including updating PIN codes and any passwords to which the staff member had access)?

Policies and procedures that you might expect to guide you

- Offboarding staff procedure
- Online safety policy
- Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policy
- Information and communication technologies security and information management policy
- Child safe policy
- Social media policy

Environment and teaching strategies, practices or mindsets that could help

- Have individual, secure logins for all online environments, centre devices and apps
- Have timely and clear educator onboarding and offboarding procedures. The process for removing educators' access to physical and digital spaces is a vital step when offboarding and is enacted immediately after the educator leaves the service
- Complete regular reviews and risk assessments of digital technologies and online environments used at the service
- Have regular training for all team members on safety online to stay up-to-date with changes in technology and security
- Understand the tracking technologies websites and social media use to collect information about account holders and how they use the information you post to their platform
- Staff are vigilant, and approved providers have oversight and control of who has access to images of children when shared on social media
- Regularly review relevant policies to ensure amendments are made and new policies are developed promptly to ensure no gaps

Relating to regulation and standards

NQS 4.2 All staff are required to uphold respectful and ethical professional standards

NQS 7.1 Systems must be in place to manage risk, and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood

Regulation 168 states that ECEC services must have policies and procedures for providing a child-safe environment, including the safe use of online environments

Regulation 170 relates to steps taken to ensure policies and procedures are followed

Child Safe Standards: 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10



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References

The following references were consulted in the creation of this workbook, and provide further instruction and advice to support children's digital safety in Australian ECEC settings:

[A guide for creating a child safe organisation - VIC](#)

[Adapting Common Sense's Digital Citizenship Curriculum for use in Australian primary schools and early education settings](#)

[Guide to the Child Safe Standards - NSW](#)

[Guidelines for implementing the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards in Queensland](#)

[Implementing Child Safe Standards in Early Education Settings: Understanding the Ecology of Policy and Practices](#)

[National Model Code FAQs](#)

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

[NQF Child Safe Culture Guide](#) and [NQF Child Safe Culture Guide | Self-assessment and risk assessment tool](#)

[NQF Online Safety Guide](#) and [NQF Online Safety Guide | Self-assessment and risk assessment tool](#)

[Providing a child safe environment: Guidelines for the National Model Code](#)

[Safe use of digital technologies and online environments — ACECQA policy guidelines](#)

[UNESCO - Minding the data: Protecting learners' privacy and security](#)

Additional helpful resources

You may wish to consider also using these resources as a compliment to this workbook:

[Child safety policies and procedures checklist](#)

[eSafety checklist for early learning services](#)

[National model code poster](#)

[National model code poster 2](#)

[Six reasonable steps to ensure staff follow policies and procedures](#)



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Our purpose is to help every
child fulfil their unique potential,
by connecting and empowering
the community around them



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