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ESAFETY FOR CHILDREN

QUALITY AREA 2 |

Version no.	Reviewed by	Authorised by	Date of issue	Amendments made
V1.1	CPELC FY2022 Committee & Management	CPELC FY2022 Committee	26th April 2022	-Amended heater, footer and personalised -Designated management to be champion of online safety.
V1.2	CPELCFY2023 Committee and Management	CPELC FY2023	14/4/23	Teaching team and families aware of the safety guidelines
V1.3	CPELC FY2024 Committee and Management	CPELC FY2024 Committee and Management	24/4/2024	Completed safety Commissioner checklist by management. Send to families - https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/parental-controls
V1.4	CPELC FY2025 Committee and Management	CPELC FY2025 Committee and Management	17/3/2025 25/8/2025 29/10/2025	Families will give consent for their children to use ipads for educational purposes via forms. All families were given a safety book from the safety commissioner in June 2025. This is done yearly to educate families and children about practical advice and strategies for parents and carers, to help them tackle the key online safety issues for children from birth to 5 years old. *Families given consent to use vimeo via forms to share video of CPELC educational program and concerts. (with a password).*
V1.5	CPELC FY2026 Committee and Management	CPELC FY2026 Committee and Management	27/4/2026	"Purpose Bullet point 3 - updated • incorporate digital technology into early learning environment in an age and developmentally appropriate and safe way" "Values Bullet point 2 - added • providing a safe environment through the creation and maintenance of a child safe culture,

				and this extends to the safe use of digital technologies and online environments" "Table of Responsibilities row 2 - updated 2. Ensuring the online environment is used in accordance with Code of Conduct, Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing, Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments, Privacy and Confidentiality and Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy" "Row 6 - updated 6. Ensuring that early childhood teachers and educators are aware of and compliant with Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments, and Privacy and Confidentiality policies" "Row 7 - added 7. Undertaking a risk assessment (refer to Sources) of all online tools (including AI), platforms, Smart Toys (refer to Sources), and child-friendly search engines and apps prior to children's use" "Row 8 - added 8. Undertaking a risk assessment (refer to Sources) and identify if children's personal devices (including wearable devices) can be used at the service and in what circumstances." "Row 11 - updated 11. Ensuring when using digital documentation platforms, early childhood teachers and educators consider the security of their digital data and the privacy of children and families (refer to Privacy and Confidently Policy and Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments) " "Row 12 - updated 12. Ensuring that only service-issued digital devices should ever be used to take photos or record videos of children" "Row 13 - added 13. Installing and update safety and security software, internet filters, and pop-up blockers on all digital devices used at the service " "Row 14 -updated 14. Ensuring there are procedures and processes around the capturing, storing and sharing of children's images and videos (refer to Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments and Privacy and Confidentiality policy)" "Row 18 - updated 18. Ensuring parents/guardians are involved in the development and review of the eSafety for Children Policy"

				"Row 22 - updated 22. Providing proactive supervision and monitoring when young children are using digital technology (refer to Supervision of Children policy) " "Row 34 - added 34. Create child-friendly guides or agreements for acceptable use of service issued devices refer to Sources" "Row 35 - added 35. Teaching children they have the right to feel safe and say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsure, uncomfortable, or unsafe" "Row 36 - added 36. Identifying and responding to online safety risks, like grooming (being subjected to manipulative behaviours), cyberbullying, excessive use of devices and screen time, and inappropriate images refer to Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy " "Row 37 - added 37. Being alert to potential signs of exposure to inappropriate material or online harm (e.g. changes in behaviour, secrecy)" "Row 39 - added 39. Encourage children to talk to a trusted adult if they see or experience something online that makes them feel uncomfortable (refer to Sources)" "Row 40 - added 40. Teaching children not to give out personal information such as their name, birthdate, address and image, online or that of others" "Background second paragraph added Creating a safe online environment for children is essential to ensure they can access digital technologies and online learning opportunities without risk. Children have the right to quality education and care in a secure environment, and this extends to the digital world. Approved providers and staff play a critical role in protecting, empowering, and educating children about online safety to prevent child maltreatment and abuse. With the rapid development of new technologies, it is vital to stay informed about potential risks, such as gaps in cybersecurity that could allow hackers to access devices and compromise children's safety. Supporting educators and children to understand both the benefits and dangers of digital technologies, and taking proactive steps to address emerging risks, is key to fostering a child safe

				culture and ensuring continuous improvement in online safety practices." "Last paragraph added The Victorian Regulatory Authority requires approved providers to comply with the National Model Code. The National Model Code is crucial for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services to ensure the safety and privacy of children. Under the Code, only service-issued electronic devices should be used for taking photos or recording videos, thereby minimising the risk of unauthorised distribution of images. The Code states that clear guidelines are developed on carrying personal devices for specific essential purposes ensuring that any exceptions are justified and controlled. Additionally, implementing strict controls for storing and retaining images or recordings of children is vital to protect their privacy and prevent misuse of sensitive information. Adhering to these guidelines not only safeguards children but also fosters trust and transparency between ECEC services and families." "Definitions Added: Smart toys: Similar to any other smart device in that they can interact with a person using them. Smart toys are connected to the internet, often have a microphone and/or camera, and try to mimic human intelligence. Children can ask them questions, and they respond like a chatbot." "Sources added • ACECQA: Consent and children's rights • ACECQA: Empowering children under 5 by asking them to give consent for photos or videos • ACECQA: NQF Online Safety Guide Self and Risk Assessment Tool • eSafety Commissioner: Online Safety Agreement • eSafety Commissioner: Talking about child sexual abuse online with 0- to 12-year-olds" Related policies "Updated ICT is now • Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments"
V1.6	CPELC FY2026 Committee and Management	CPELC FY2026 Committee and Management	27/10/2026	Values "Added: ensuring all adults who interact with children in online and digital environments maintain professional boundaries, demonstrate child-safe behaviours, meet all relevant screening, suitability

				and registration requirements and comply with Working with Children verification and monitoring obligations where applicable" Responsibilities "Updated: 3.All persons engaged by the service must complete mandatory Child Safety Training and Child Protection Training as required under the National Quality Framework and relevant state legislation. The approved provider will ensure training is completed within required timeframes and records are maintained to demonstrate compliance. Relevant eSafety professional learning may be required in addition to mandatory child safety training. 29. Considering the needs of all children including those with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, LGBTQIA+ children and young people, those from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, children experiencing family breakdown or in out of home care and others who may be experiencing vulnerability and susceptible to online harms (Child Safe Standards 5 – 5.3)" "Added: 56. Verifying Working with Children Check Clearances before engaging any employee, volunteer, student, contractor or third-party provider undertaking child-related work involving access to children, children's images, recordings, personal information, online platforms or digital communications. Ensuring these individuals are connected through Working with Children Connect (refer to Definitions) where required and records are maintained and updated when engagements commence, cease or change. 57. Ensuring all relevant Working with Children Check Clearances, Victorian Institute of Teaching registration and other screening requirements are satisfied before undertaking child-related work, including verifying Working with Children Check Clearance status, connecting individuals to the service through Working with Children Connect (refer to Definitions) where required, maintaining workforce records and ensuring information remains current throughout the period of engagement (refer to Sources) 58. Ensuring all personnel complete mandatory Child Safety Training and Child Protection Training within required timeframes, monitoring completion status, maintaining training records and ensuring refresher training is completed every two years. (refer to Sources)" Background Added: The approved provider will ensure all workers, volunteers and students complete mandatory Child Safety Training relevant to their

				role through the Australian Government's Geccko learning platform. The training includes: · Foundation Training (Courses 1 and 2) · Advanced Training (Courses 3 and 4) · Leadership and Governance Training (Course 5) Completion requirements vary according to role and responsibilities within the service. New workers, volunteers and students required to undertake Child Safety Training must complete the required training before commencing direct work with children or within 14 days of engagement, whichever occurs first. Personnel required to complete Advanced Child Safety Training must do so within the prescribed regulatory timeframe. Refresher Child Safety Training must be completed every two years. Legislation and Standards "Added: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)" Definitions Added: Working with Children Connect (WWC Connect): The Social Services Regulator's online system that enables organisations to verify and connect workers undertaking child-related work, maintain workforce records and receive notifications if a person's Working with Children Check Clearance status changes Sources "Added: ACECQA: Approved Child Safety Training ACECQA: Child Safety and Child Protection Training Requirements Geccko Learning Platform Mandatory Child Safety Training for Working with Children Check Clearance holders Working with Children (WWC) Connect"



PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for Columbia Park Early Learning Centre to:

- provide a safe online environment for all children which ensures their safety, health and wellbeing
- support young children to develop an understanding of digital networks and to using digital networks in safe and appropriate ways
- incorporate digital technology into early learning environment in an age and developmentally appropriate and safe way
- support and communicate with families about safe online practices at home and in the community.

POLICY STATEMENT

The safety, health, wellbeing, rights and best interests of every child are the paramount consideration and must guide all decisions, actions and practices of educators within the education and care service.

VALUES

Columbia Park Early Learning Centreis committed to:

- the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times
- providing a safe environment through the creation and maintenance of a child safe culture, and this extends to the safe use of digital technologies and online environments
- fostering opportunities for each child to participate in the digital environment, express their views and to learn safely
- always acting in the best interests of each child and has zero tolerance of online abuse
- supporting families in creating a safe on-line environment both at home and at the service.
- ensuring all adults who interact with children in online and digital environments maintain professional boundaries, demonstrate child-safe behaviours, meet all relevant screening, suitability and registration requirements and comply with Working with Children verification and monitoring obligations where applicable

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Columbia Park Early Learning Centre.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
1. Designating a staff member/s to champion online safety and be a first point of contact for early childhood teachers, educators, staff, parents/guardians and children to report online safety issues *(Child Safe Standards 2- .2.2)*	R	√			
2. Ensuring the online environment is used in accordance with *Code of Conduct, Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing, Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments, Privacy and Confidentiality and Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy (Child Safe Standards 9 - 9.2)*	R	R	√		√
3. All persons engaged by the service must complete mandatory Child Safety Training and Child Protection	R	√	√		√

	Training as required under the National Quality Framework and relevant state legislation. The approved provider will ensure training is completed within required timeframes and records are maintained to demonstrate compliance. Relevant eSafety professional learning may be required in addition to mandatory child safety training. *(refer to Sources), (Child Safe Standards 8- .8.2)*					
4.	Providing early childhood teachers and educators with regular opportunities to engage in ongoing, informal professional learning so they have up-to-date information about the risks and changing practices in online safety *(Child Safe Standards 8- .8.2)*	√	√			
5.	Engaging in professional learning to build capacity and support the implementation of online safety education *(Child Safe Standards 8- .8.2, 8.4)*	√	√	√		√
6.	Ensuring that early childhood teachers and educators are aware of and compliant with *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments,* and *Privacy and Confidentiality policies (Child Safe Standards 1- 1.5, 11 – 11.5)*	R	R			
7.	Undertaking a risk assessment *(refer to Sources)* of all online tools (including AI), platforms, Smart Toys *(refer to Sources)*, and child-friendly search engines and apps prior to children's use *(Child Safe Standards 2 – 2.5, 9- .9.1, 9.3)*	R	R	√		√
8.	Undertaking a risk assessment *(refer to Sources)* and identify if children's personal devices (including wearable devices) can be used at the service and in what circumstances *(Child Safe Standards 2 – 2.5, 9- .9.1, 9.3)*	R	R	√		√
9.	Considering risk management plans when engaging with third party contractors to assess whether, and the extent to which, the engagement of third-party contractors poses risks of child abuse and harm *(Child Safe Standards 2 – 2.5, 9- .9.1, 9.3, 9.4)*	R	R	√		√
10.	Ensuring safety procedures are developed and implemented when using digital communication platforms *(refer to Definitions)* with children and their families *(refer to Attachment 1) (Child Safe Standards 11 – 11.3)*	R	R	√		√
11.	Ensuring when using digital documentation platforms, early childhood teachers and educators consider the security of their digital data and the privacy of children and families *(refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments) (Child Safe Standards 9- .9.1, 9.3)*	R	R	√		√
12.	Ensuring that only service-issued digital devices should ever be used to take photos or record videos of children	R	√	√		√
13.	Installing and update safety and security software, internet filters, and pop-up blockers on all digital devices used at the service *(Child Safe Standards 9- .9.1, 9.3)*	√	√	√		√
14.	Ensuring there are procedures and processes around the capturing, storing and sharing of children's images and	R	R	√	√	√

	videos *(refer to Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments and Privacy and Confidentiality policy)*					
15.	Creating a shared understanding between Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, families, early childhood teachers and educators about digital technology use, by adults, in front of children *(Child Safe Standards 4 – 4.2)*	√	√	√	√	√
16.	Ensuring that appropriate filtering *(refer to Definitions)* and monitoring are in place for all devices used at the service *(Child Safe Standards 9- .9.1, 9.3)*	R	R	√		√
17.	Reviewing online safety education annually to identify strengths and weaknesses and update to ensure relevance to online safety issues, risks, and harms *(Child Safe Standards 10 - 10.1)*	R	√	√	√	√
18.	Ensuring parents/guardians are involved in the development and review of the *eSafety for Children Policy (Child Safe Standards 11 – 11.3)*	R	√		√	
19.	Providing families with information on where to go for help with online safety issues, including the eSafety Commissioner *(refer to Sources) (Child Safe Standards 4 – 4.2)*	√	√	√		√
20.	Regularly discussing concepts of 'being online' or 'the internet' and online safety with children *(refer to Sources) (Child Safe Standards 3 – 3.1)*		√	√	√	√
21.	Providing children with the opportunity to engage in digital play through communicating, creating and consuming digital content in safe and age-appropriate ways *(Child Safe Standards 3 – 3.1)*	√	√	√	√	√
22.	Providing proactive supervision and monitoring when young children are using digital technology *(refer to Supervision of Children policy)*	R	√	√	√	√
23.	Ensuring an online safety agreement is created in collaboration with children and families *(refer to Sources) (Child Safe Standards 11 – 11.3)*	√	√	√		
24.	Developing and implementing a digital learning environment and opportunities that are accessible to and relevant for all age groups	√	√	√		
25.	Using digital technologies to promote social interactions between children, peers and early childhood teacher/educators *(Child Safe Standards 3 – 3.2)*	√	√	√		
26.	Teaching digital citizenship *(refer to Definitions)* and digital/media literacy *(refer to Definitions)* to support critical thinking		√	√		√
27.	Developing social and emotional learning skills to support children' understanding and management of emotions, respectful online relationships and resilience		√	√		√
28.	Providing opportunities for children to explore and experiment with the functions of a diverse range of digital		√	√		√

technologies *(refer to Definitions)* alongside adult modelling and instruction in digital technology use					
29. Considering the needs of all children including those with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, LGBTQIA+ children and young people, those from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, children experiencing family breakdown or in out of home care and others who may be experiencing vulnerability and susceptible to online harms *(Child Safe Standards 5 – 5.3)*	R	√	√		√
30. Modelling self-regulated *(refer to Definitions)* digital technology use with children and families that recognises the importance of sustained social interactions between children and adults		√	√		√
31. Respecting children and family's diversity and strive to meet their needs for online safety education inclusive of gender, age, culture, ability, appearance, socioeconomic status, family background, geographical location, and access *(Child Safe Standards 5 – 5.3)*	R	R	√	√	√
32. Ensuring processes are in place to ensure children and parents/guardian who speak languages other than English understand this policy	R	√			
33. Upholding children's rights to provision, participation and protection in digital environments *(Child Safe Standards 3 – 3.1)*	R	√	√		√
34. Create child-friendly guides or agreements for acceptable use of service issued devices *refer to Sources*	√	√	√		√
35. Teaching children they have the right to feel safe and say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsure, uncomfortable, or unsafe *(Child Safe Standards 3 – 3.1)*	√	√	√		√
36. Identifying and responding to online safety risks, like grooming (being subjected to manipulative behaviours), cyberbullying, excessive use of devices and screen time, and inappropriate images *refer to Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy (Child Safe Standards 9 – 9.1)*	R	R	R		R
37. Being alert to potential signs of exposure to inappropriate material or online harm (e.g. changes in behaviour, secrecy) *(Child Safe Standards 9 – 9.1)*	R	R	√		√
38. Ensuring children know what to do if they encounter inappropriate materials online *(Child Safe Standards 3 – 3.1)*	R	√	√		√
39. Encourage children to talk to a trusted adult if they see or experience something online that makes them feel uncomfortable *(refer to Sources) (Child Safe Standards 3 – 3.1)*	√	√	√		√
40. Teaching children not to give out personal information such as their name, birthdate, address and image, online or that of others *(Child Safe Standards 3 – 3.1)*	√	√	√		√
41. Asking children their permission before taking photos or videos *(Child Safe Standards 3 – 3.1)*	√	√	√		√

42. Implementing the uses of technologies in everyday life and use real or imaginary technologies as props in children's play		√	√		√
43. Supporting the use of digital technologies *(refer to Definitions)* in the curriculum as tools for designing, drawing, editing, reflecting and composing		√	√		√
44. Modelling internet use with children for learning purposes and provide opportunities for assessing the quality and relevance of information *(Child Safe Standards 3 – 3.1)*		√	√		√
45. Modelling active decision making regarding digital technology use with, by and for young children that provides a balance of digital and non-digital experiences and activities at the service		√	√		√
46. Providing digital technology experiences for young children that promote movement opportunities		√	√		√
47. Ensuring that screen-based digital technology *(refer to Definitions*) use while sitting is only for short periods and does not replace periods of active physical movement		√	√		√
48. Promoting postural awareness and change by providing a variety of spaces and heights for children to use digital technologies		√	√		√
49. Helping children develop self-regulation *(refer to Definitions)* for using digital technologies and support them to transition from digital to non-digital activities		√	√		√
50. Encouraging the use of digital technologies *(refer to Definitions)* in the curriculum for children to access images and information, explore diverse perspectives and make sense of their world *(Child Safe Standards 3 – 3.1)*		√	√		√
51. Teaching children skills and techniques that encourage them to use technologies to explore new information and represent their ideas		√	√		√
52. Developing strategies for families to communicate negative experiences or concerns regarding online issues *(Child Safe Standards 4 – 4.2)*	**R**	**R**			
53. Supporting families to understand that exposure to disturbing or arousing content and screens in the hour before sleep time decreases the length and quality of children's sleep	√	√	√		
54. Direct families towards government and/or not-for-profit organisations for advice and resources on controls and the selection of digital media, content, apps and games that are appropriate for use by young children *(refer to Sources) (Child Safe Standards 4 – 4.2)*	√	√	√		
55. Providing families with information about online safety and risks in the online environment, such as online grooming, cyber bullying and sexting *(Child Safe Standards 4 – 4.2)*	R	R	R		√
56. Verifying Working with Children Check Clearances before engaging any employee, volunteer, student, contractor or	R	R			

third-party provider undertaking child-related work involving access to children, children's images, recordings, personal information, online platforms or digital communications. Ensuring these individuals are connected through Working with Children Connect *(refer to Definitions)* where required and records are maintained and updated when engagements commence, cease or change.					
57. Ensuring all relevant Working with Children Check Clearances, Victorian Institute of Teaching registration and other screening requirements are satisfied before undertaking child-related work, including verifying Working with Children Check Clearance status, connecting individuals to the service through Working with Children Connect *(refer to Definitions)* where required, maintaining workforce records and ensuring information remains current throughout the period of engagement *(refer to Sources)*	R	R	√		√
58. Ensuring all personnel complete mandatory Child Safety Training and Child Protection Training within required timeframes, monitoring completion status, maintaining training records and ensuring refresher training is completed every two years. *(refer to Sources)*	R	R	√		√



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

Young children are growing up in a technological world and need to be supported to understand how technology works and the impact it has on their lives. Technology is now used by young children in early childhood services, and at home for gaming, socialising and learning. When used wisely technology can support children's learning and relationships. Enjoyable and engaging shared experiences that optimise the potential for children's learning and development can support children's relationships both with adults and their peers.

Creating a safe online environment for children is essential to ensure they can access digital technologies and online learning opportunities without risk. Children have the right to quality education and care in a secure environment, and this extends to the digital world. Approved providers and staff play a critical role in protecting, empowering, and educating children about online safety to prevent child maltreatment and abuse. With the rapid development of new technologies, it is vital to stay informed about potential risks, such as gaps in cybersecurity that could allow hackers to access devices and compromise children's safety. Supporting educators and children to understand both the benefits and dangers of digital technologies, and taking proactive steps to address emerging risks, is key to fostering a child safe culture and ensuring continuous improvement in online safety practices.

Educators are accustomed to working in partnership with families in many areas of children's development. Now that young children are growing up in digital contexts, it's also important for educators and families to work in partnership regarding the use of digital technologies with, by and for young children. An educator's role is not necessarily to teach children about the technology itself, but to create learning environments where educators and children think, talk and learn about technology and online safety together.

The Early Years Learning Framework (the Framework) was developed to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to five years. The Framework assists early childhood teachers and educators' in providing young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning. Outcome 4 of the Framework talks about how children are confident and involved learners. It

encourages early learning services to introduce children to appropriate tools, technologies and media and provide the children with skills, knowledge and techniques to enhance their learning. Outcome 4 also states that children should experiment with different types of technologies to investigate, and problem solve.

Outcome 5 of the Framework talks about how children are effective communicators and provides guidance to early childhood teacher and educators in supporting children to use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking.

That being the case, the early childhood sector plays an important role in supporting children's learning and development in relation to technology and staying safe online. Importantly, young children need to be provided the opportunity to learn about online safety and use technology in appropriate ways.

Young children and their families participate in digital contexts in different ways according to their access to digital technologies, the internet, and the views they hold about the role digital technology plays in their lives. Research indicates that internet access and digital technology is influenced by socioeconomic resources, geographic location, gender and age (Judge, Puckett & Cabuk, 2004). Families' beliefs and attitudes about digital technology also influence the access their children have to different types of digital technologies (Blackwell, Lauricella, Wartella, Robb & Schomburg, 2013). Therefore, the experience of growing up in digital contexts is not universally the same, as not every child and family will use, value or understand digital technologies in the same way. However, all children have the right to actively participate online, this includes the right to be heard, the right to be respected and the right to feel safe.

The Victorian Regulatory Authority requires approved providers to comply with the National Model Code. The National Model Code is crucial for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services to ensure the safety and privacy of children. Under the Code, only service-issued electronic devices should be used for taking photos or recording videos, thereby minimising the risk of unauthorised distribution of images. The Code states that clear guidelines are developed on carrying personal devices for specific essential purposes ensuring that any exceptions are justified and controlled. Additionally, implementing strict controls for storing and retaining images or recordings of children is vital to protect their privacy and prevent misuse of sensitive information. Adhering to these guidelines not only safeguards children but also fosters trust and transparency between ECEC services and families.

The approved provider will ensure all workers, volunteers and students complete mandatory Child Safety Training relevant to their role through the Australian Government's Geccko learning platform.

The training includes:

- Foundation Training (Courses 1 and 2)
- Advanced Training (Courses 3 and 4)
- Leadership and Governance Training (Course 5)

Completion requirements vary according to role and responsibilities within the service.

New workers, volunteers and students required to undertake Child Safety Training must complete the required training before commencing direct work with children or within 14 days of engagement, whichever occurs first. Personnel required to complete Advanced Child Safety Training must do so within the prescribed regulatory timeframe. Refresher Child Safety Training must be completed every two years.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Child Safe Standards
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children Health and Safety and Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

- Online Safety Act 2021
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

Co-playing: When two or more children and/or an adult and child(ren) engage in play together, communicating about their actions, about the content, or interacting in any way.

Co-viewing: Occurs as two or more people view the same content together, promoting opportunity for conversation and communication about the content they are viewing.

Digital citizenship: Citizenship in digital contexts recognises that young children are active participants in their communities now and into the future

Digital communication platforms: video teleconferencing software program such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Webex Meetings, Skype

Digital contexts: involve both actual access to digital technologies and the ways in which people think about and value the use of digital technologies in their lives.

Digital data: Information that is transmitted digitally, including (but not limited to) text, audio, images and video.

Digital documentation: Recording and analysing children's engagement and learning using digital tools. This can include photos, text and video and may be communicated via an online platform.

Digital literacy: The ability to identify and use technology confidently, creatively and critically to meet the demands and challenges of living, learning and working with digital technologies like internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices.

Digital technology: Microprocessors or small 'chips' that convert information into numbers, digital technology enables large amounts of data to be stored and shared so that it can be accessed, created and used by people anywhere, at any time. Digital technologies are frequently networked or connected, enabling people to share, communicate, store, retrieve and manipulate digital data for education, entertainment, recreational, organisational and work purposes. There many types of digital technologies used by people in daily life include computers, tablets, smart televisions, smartphones and smart watches

eSafety Commissioner: Australia's national independent regulator for online safety. purpose is to help safeguard Australians at risk from online harms and to promote safer, more positive online experiences

Filtering: Software designed to automatically sort incoming emails into folders, block access to certain web pages, etc., according to present rules or conditions.

Interactive media: refers to digital and analog materials, including software programs, applications (apps), broadcast and streaming media, some children's television programming, e-books, the Internet, and other

forms of content designed to facilitate active and creative use by young children and to encourage social engagement with other children and adults.

Screen time: A general term that includes any time a child engages with an electronic screen, including (but not limited to) watching television, engaging with educational games or creating digital books.

Sedentary behaviour: Sitting or lying down; awake but relatively inactive or stationary.

Self-regulation: The capacity for children (and adults) to regulate their behaviour in response to their emotions and thinking.

Smart toys: Similar to any other smart device in that they can interact with a person using them. Smart toys are connected to the internet, often have a microphone and/or camera, and try to mimic human intelligence. Children can ask them questions, and they respond like a chatbot.

Technology: The development of new objects or tools by people that help them in their lives. Three broad types of technology are mechanical technology (e.g. wheels, blocks, levers, gears); analogue technology (e.g. film-based photography, drawing, painting); and digital technology (e.g. mobile phones and computers).

Wearable technologies: Digital technologies that can be worn, e.g. watches, fitness tracking devices, jewellery and clothes made with electronic textiles.

Working with Children Connect (WWC Connect): The Social Services Regulator's online system that enables organisations to verify and connect workers undertaking child-related work, maintain workforce records and receive notifications if a person's Working with Children Check Clearance status changes

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- ACECQA: Approved Child Safety Training
- ACECQA: Consent and children's rights
- ACECQA: Child Safety and Child Protection Training Requirements
- ACECQA: Early Year Learning and Development Framework
- ACECQA: Empowering children under 5 by asking them to give consent for photos or videos
- ACECQA: National Model Code - Taking images in Early Childhood Education and Care
- ACECQA: NQF Online Safety Guide Self and Risk Assessment Tool
- ACECQA: Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Early Childhood Australia: Statement on young children and digital technology
- eSafety Commissioner: eSafety's professional learning modules
- eSafety Commissioner: https://www.esafety.gov.au/
- eSafety Commissioner: Online Safety Agreement
- eSafety Commissioner: Online Safety Agreement
- eSafety Commissioner: Talking about child sexual abuse online with 0- to 12-year-olds
- Geccko Learning Platform
- Social Services Regulator: Changes to the Working with Children Check
- The eSafety Guide: https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide
- The Playing IT Safe Framework and Alignment: https://playingitsafe.org.au/
- Mandatory Child Safety Training for Working with Children Check Clearance holders
- Working with Children (WWC) Connect

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Compliments and Complaints
- Educational Program
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Inclusion and Equity

- Interactions with Children
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Supervision of Children
- Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk *(Regulation 172 (2))*.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Digital communication platform safety guidelines

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Columbia Park Early Learning Centre on 27/10/2026

REVIEW DATE: 27/10/2027

ATTACHMENT 1. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORM SAFETY GUIDELINES

Using digital communication platform can be a great way for children to learn and explore, but it can also put them at risk. It is important for early childhood teacher and educators to understand the risks associated with children using the internet. The eSafety Commissioner provides early years professional learning and resources to help services in keeping children while safe online: www.esafety.gov.au

Prior to using a digital communication platform:

- Educators to complete eSafety learning module *(refer to Sources)*
- Educators to email digital communication platform guidelines and gain written consent from families
- Educators be familiar with using digital communication platform and its functions

Guidelines for educators

1. Be the host and have full control throughout the session
2. Two staff to be present online at all times
3. Dress appropriately and ensure background is presentable and professional
4. Ensure the use of the "waiting room" function so to monitor attendees
5. Decline or remove unauthorised participants immediately
6. Follow *Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing and Code of Conduct Policy* at all times
7. Use the services digital communication platform at all times with families (no personal accounts)
8. Use different meeting ID each session to reduce hacking attempts

Guidelines for families

1. The educator is the host of the [insert name of the digital communication platform] session and will have control of the meeting throughout the session
2. All participants must join with the child's first and last name for identification purposes
3. A parent/guardian to be present online at all times
4. All participants to dress appropriately
5. Unauthorised participants will be immediately by removed by the host
6. Keep private information for 1:1 discussion with the educator. If you wish to speak about a private matter, you can contact the educator via email or call to make a time to discuss the matter
7. Families are requested not to record, take photos during [insert name of the digital communication platform] sessions or share [insert name of the digital communication platform] links with others
8. We encourage families to read the eSafety Commissioner's Online safety for under 5's booklet with their child/ren as part of our commitment to keep children safe while online

Consent

I [parent's full name] consent [insert child's full name] to participate in [insert name of the digital communication platform] with Columbia Park Early Learning Centre Educators. I have read, understood and will adhere to the above guidelines.

Signature: _____ Date: _____