

ESAFETY FOR CHILDREN

QUALITY AREA 2 | ELAA VERSION 1.1



PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for Denzil Don Kindergarten to:

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



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Denzil Don Kindergarten is committed to:

- the rights of all children to feel safe and always be safe.
- fostering opportunities for children to participate in the digital environment, express their views, and learn safely.
- acting in the best interests of each child and having zero tolerance for online abuse.
- Support families in creating a safe online environment at home and at the service.

SCOPE

This policy applies to staff, students, volunteers, visitors, parents/carers, children, and others attending programs and activities at Denzil Don Kindergarten, including offsite excursions.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	All staff including teaching and non-teaching	Parents/carers	Contractors, volunteers, and students
R indicates legislation requirements and should not be deleted.					
Nominating a staff member to champion online safety and be the first point of contact for all staff, parents/carers, and children to report online safety issues	R	√			
Ensuring the online environment is used in accordance with the <i>Code of Conduct, Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing, and Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy</i>	R	R	√		√



Providing all staff with regular opportunities to engage in professional learning so they have up-to-date information about the risks and changing practices in online safety	√	√			
Engaging in professional learning to build capacity and support the implementation of online safety education.	√	√	√		√
Ensuring all staff are aware of and comply with <i>Information and Communication Technology</i> and <i>Privacy and Confidentiality policies</i>	R	R			
Performing a risk assessment of all online tools and platforms before children's use	R	R	√		√
Considering risk management plans when engaging with third-party contractors to assess the extent to which the engagement poses risks of child abuse and harm	R	R	√		√
Ensuring safety procedures are developed and implemented when using digital communication platforms (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) with children and their families (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>)	R	R	√		√
Ensuring when using digital documentation platforms that the security of the digital data and the privacy of children and families is considered (<i>refer to Privacy and Confidentially Policy and Information and Communication Technology Policy</i>)	R	R	√		√
Ensuring there are processes around the taking and storing of children's images (<i>refer to Information and Communication Technology and Privacy and Confidentiality policy</i>)	R	R	√	√	√
Creating a shared understanding between Denzil Don Kindergarten, families, and all staff about digital technology use by adults in front of children (role modelling)	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that appropriate filtering (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and monitoring are in place for all devices used at the service	R	R	√		√
Reviewing online safety education annually to identify strengths and weaknesses and update to ensure relevance to online safety issues, risks, and harms	R	√	√	√	√
Regularly discussing concepts of 'being online' or 'the internet' and online safety with children (<i>refer to Sources</i>)		√	√	√	√
Providing children with the opportunity to engage in digital play through communicating, creating, and consuming digital content in safe and age-appropriate ways	√	√	√	√	√
Providing proactive supervision when young children are using digital technology (<i>refer to Supervision of Children policy</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Using digital technologies to promote social interactions between children, peers, and educators	√	√	√		
Teaching digital citizenship (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and digital literacy (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to support critical thinking		√	√		√
Providing opportunities for children to explore and experiment with the functions of a diverse range of digital technologies (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) alongside adult modelling and instruction		√	√		√
Considering the needs of all children, including those with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students,	R	√	√		√

LGBTQI students, those from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, children experiencing family breakdown or in out-of-home care, and others who may be more vulnerable and susceptible to online harms.					
Modelling regulated (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) digital technology use with children and families that recognises the importance of sustained social interactions between children and adults		√	√		√
Respecting children and family's diversity and striving to meet their needs for online safety education inclusive of gender, age, culture, ability, appearance, socioeconomic status, family background, geographical location, and access	R	R	√	√	√
Upholding children's rights to provision, participation, and protection in digital environments	R	√	√		√
Ensuring children know what to do if they encounter inappropriate materials online	R	√	√		√
Asking children for permission before taking their photo	√	√	√		√
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		√	√		√
Providing digital technology experiences for young children that promote movement opportunities		√	√		√
Ensuring that screen-based digital technology (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) while sitting is only for short periods and does not replace periods of active physical movement		√	√		√
Helping children develop self-regulation (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) for using digital technologies and supporting them to transition from digital to non-digital activities		√	√		√
Encouraging the use of digital technologies (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) in the program for children to access images and information, explore diverse perspectives, and make sense of their world		√	√		√
Teaching skills that encourage children to use technology to explore new information and represent their ideas.		√	√		√
Developing strategies for families to communicate and raise online issues	R	R			
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.	√	√	√		
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 (<i>refer to Sources</i>)	√	√	√		



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

Young children are growing up in a technological world and, therefore, must be supported to understand how technology works and impacts their lives. Young children now use technology 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 with adults and their peers.

The Early Years Learning Framework (the Framework) assists early childhood 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 discusses how children are confident and involved learners. It encourages services to introduce children to appropriate tools, technologies, and media, providing them with skills, knowledge, and techniques to enhance their learning. Outcome 4 also states that children should experiment with different technologies to investigate and problem-solve.

Outcome 5 of the Framework discusses how children are effective communicators. It guides early childhood educators to support children in using 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 given opportunities to learn about online safety and use technology appropriately.

Young children and their families participate in digital contexts in different ways according to their access to digital technologies, the internet, and their views about digital technology's role in their lives. Research indicates that internet access and digital technology are influenced by socioeconomic resources, geographic location, gender, and age (Judge, Puckett & Cabuk, 2004). Families' beliefs and attitudes about digital technology also influence their children's access 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 participate online actively; this includes the right to be heard, respected, and safe.

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 using digital technologies with, by, and for young children. An educator's role is not necessarily to teach children about technology but to create learning environments where educators and children think, talk, and learn about technology and online safety together.

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

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. Refer to the definitions file on the kindergarten website for regularly used terms.

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 programs such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Webex Meetings, Skype

Digital contexts: includes both access to digital technologies and how people think about and value the use of digital technologies in their lives.

Digital data: information 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.

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: people in daily life use many types of digital technologies, including computers, tablets, smart televisions, smartphones, and smartwatches.

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

Filtering: software that sorts incoming emails into folders, blocks access to specific web pages, etc., according to present rules or conditions.

Screen time: the period 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 of children (and adults) to adjust their behaviour in response to their emotions, thinking and situation they are in.

Technology: development of new tools to help solve a problem or make life easier. Three broad types of technology are mechanical technology (e.g., wheels, blocks, levers, gears), analog 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.



SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Early Childhood Australia Statement on young children and digital technology: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Digital-policy-statement.pdf>
- Early Year Learning and Development Framework: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>
- eSafety Commissioner: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>
- eSafety's professional learning modules: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/training-for-professionals/early-years>
- Online Safety Agreement: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/early-years-program/online-safety-agreement>

- The eSafety Guide: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide>
- The Playing IT Safe Framework and Alignment: <https://playingitsafe.org.au/>
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Compliments and Complaints
- Curriculum Development
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Inclusion and Equity
- Information Communication Technology
- Interactions with Children
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Supervision of Children



EVALUATION

To assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the service will:

- seek feedback from those 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 policy review cycle or as required.
- notify stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to it or its procedures unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).



ATTACHMENTS

- NIL



AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Denzil Don Kindergarten on 23/12/2023.

REVIEW DATE: 23 / DECEMBER / 2025