SOMERVILLE KINDERGARTEN INCORPORATED
eSafety For Children
Best Practice – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure Somerville Kindergarten provides a safe online environment for all children which ensures their safety, health, and well-being. It will support young children to develop an understanding of digital networks and to use digital networks in safe and appropriate ways.

Incorporating technology into the early years learning environment can be done in an age-appropriate and safe way, with support and communication with families about safe online practices at home and in the community.

VALUES

Somerville Kindergarten is committed to the rights of all children to feel safe and be safe at all times. Fostering opportunities for each child to participate in the digital environment, express their views, and learn safely. Always act in the best interest of each child and have zero tolerance for online abuse. Support families in creating a safe online environment both at home and at the kindergarten.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, the person in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the program and activities of Somerville Kindergarten.

IMPLEMENTATION

The child may only leave the service in the care of a parent/guardian, authorised nominee, or a person authorised by one of these parties to collect the child. An authorised person does not include a parent who is prohibited by court order from having contact with the child.

Management / Approved Provider

- o Designating a staff member/s to champion online safety and be the first point of contact for early childhood teachers, educators, staff, parents/guardians, and children to report online safety issues
- o Ensuring the online environment is used in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing, and Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- o Early childhood teachers and educators engaged in professional learning about online safety (such as esafety's professional learning modules) (refer to Sources), enabling them to identify and mitigate the risks associated with being online
- o 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
- o Ensuring processes are in place to ensure children and parents/guardians who speak languages other than English understand this policy

Nominated supervisor / Responsible person will be responsible for:

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- o Engaging in professional learning to build capacity and support the implementation of online safety education.
- o Ensuring that early childhood teachers and educators are aware of and compliant with Information and Communication Technology and Privacy and Confidentiality policies
- o Ensuring safety procedures are developed and implemented when using digital communication platforms (refer to Definitions) with children and their families (refer to Attachment 1)
- o 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 Information and Communication Technology Policy)
- o Developing strategies for families to communicate and raise online issues
- o 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.
- o 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)

Educators will:
- o Creating a shared understanding between Somerville Kindergartenfamilies, early childhood teachers, and educators about digital technology use, by adults, in front of children
- o Ensuring that appropriate filtering (refer to Definitions) and monitoring are in place for all devices used at the service
- o Reviewing online safety education annually to identify strengths and weaknesses and update to ensure relevance to online safety issues, risks, and harms
- o Ensuring parents/guardians are involved in the development and review of the eSafety policy
- o Providing proactive supervision when young children are using digital technology (refer to Supervision of Children policy)
- o Using digital technologies to promote social interactions between children, peers, and early childhood teachers/educators
- o Asking children for their permission before taking photos or videos
- o Modelling internet use with children for learning purposes and providing opportunities for assessing the quality and relevance of information.
- o Teaching children skills and techniques that encourage them to use technologies to explore new information and represent their ideas.

Families will:
- o Regularly discuss concepts of being online or the internet and online safety with children (refer to Sources)
- o Provide children with the opportunity to engage in digital play through communicating, creating, and consuming digital content in safe and age-appropriate ways
- o Develop social and emotional learning skills to support children's understanding and management of emotions, respectful online relationships, and resilience
- o Respect 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
- o Ask children for their permission before taking photos or videos
- o Implement the uses of technologies in everyday life and using real or imaginary technologies as props in children's play
- o Teach children skills and techniques that encourage them to use technologies to explore new information and represent their ideas.

All Volunteers and students, whilst at Somerville Kindergarten, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures. Staff to always make sure that they are aware of all policies and procedures before commencing.

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.

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 teachers 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 are 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.

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.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS
Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:
- 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's Health and Safety and Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- 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: http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: http://www.comlaw.gov.au/

EVALUATION
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

o   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

DEFINITIONS

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

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

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

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: This occurs as two or more people view the same content together, promoting an opportunity for conversation and communication about the content they are viewing.

SOURCES

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:
o   Early Childhood Australia Statement on Young Children and digital technology: http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Digital-policy-statement.pdf
o   Early Year Learning and Development Framework: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/ndf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks
o   eSafety Commissioner: https://www.esafety.gov.au./
o   eSafety's professional learning modules: https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/training-for-professionals/early-years
o   Online Safety Agreement: https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/early-years-program/online-safety-agreement
o   The eSafety Guide: https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide
o   The Playing IT Safe Framework and Alignment: https://playingitsafe.org.au/
o   Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks

RELATED POLICIES

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

ATTACHMENTS

o   Attachment 1: Digital communication platform safety guidelines

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ATTACHMENT 1: DIGITAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORM SAFETY GUIDELINES

Using digital communication platforms 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 teachers 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 safe online: www.esafety.gov.au

Prior to using a digital communication platform:
- Educators to complete eSafety learning module
- Educators to email digital communication platform guidelines and gain written consent from families
- Educators be familiar with using digital communication platforms and their 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 your background is presentable and professional
4. Ensure the use of the "waiting room" function 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 IDs each session to reduce hacking attempts

Guidelines for Families
1. The educator is the host of the web game/lesson 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 is to be present online at all times
4. All participants are to dress appropriately
5. Unauthorised participants will be immediately 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. We ask families not to record, take photos during sessions or share 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 keeping children safe while online

CONSENT

I _____ consent _____

to participate in _____
with Somerville Kindergarten Educators. I have read, understood, and will adhere to the above guidelines.

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/_____