

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

We recognise both the benefits and challenges of social media platforms. This policy has been developed to provide employees, families, volunteers and students with standards of use as they engage in sharing, conversations or interactions using social media for official, professional and personal use.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1.1	Service philosophy and purposes	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
7.1.3	Roles and Responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service.
7.2	Leadership	Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
84	Awareness of child protection law
181	Confidentiality and storage of records
183	Storage of records and other documents

## PURPOSE

Being part of the Highland Grove community entails a position of trust and responsibility. We aim to ensure that our Service, the children, educators, and/or families are not compromised in any form on social media platforms and that all social media usage complies with our Service's philosophy, relevant policies, and the code of conduct.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, the approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, and visitors (including contractors) of the Service.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Social media is defined as “*forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)*” (Merriam-Webster dictionary).

We recognise that there are many advantages in using social media to network. It is important to approach usage with caution, through careful and systematic management. Whilst healthy debate may provide thought-provoking discussion, there are guidelines in place to ensure that Highland Grove remains open and welcoming for children, families, and staff.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations recognise the importance of safe physical and online environments to promote safety and wellbeing of all children. Our Service has the responsibility to ensure children and educators are protected from harm when they engage with digital technology including social media.

This policy applies to all forms of social media including (but not limited to):

- Social networking sites e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
- Image sharing sites e.g., Instagram, Snapchat, and Imgur
- Music/dance videos e.g., Tik Tok
- Video hosting sites e.g., YouTube and Vimeo
- Community blogs e.g., Tumblr and Medium
- Discussion sites e.g., Reddit and Quora

## SERVICE FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS

Our Service has a Facebook account and an Instagram account which are occasionally used to share information with our families and community and is administered by the **Approved Provider and Educational Leader**.

The intent of these platforms for our centre is to:

- keep families in touch with what's happening, at times including upcoming and special events.
- connect with parents and the wider community regarding our centre and our program.

### THE APPROVED PROVIDER OR NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- obtain written authorisation from a child's parents prior to posting any comment or photos of their child.
- ensure personal information about families, children and staff is not posted on-line
- ensure all passwords are kept confidential
- Provide reminders to families that in the situation of centre events, parents, family members and caregivers are not post any photo of a child other than their own on social media.

Regarding all social media, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff members, volunteers and students will not:

- access personal Facebook accounts or any other social media accounts on any workplace device
- access personal Facebook or any other social media accounts whilst educating and caring for children
- post any photos taken of the children enrolled at the service on their personal Facebook or any other social media account
- post any information about the Service, colleagues, children, or families on any personal social media account
- vilify, harass or bully any other person who works at the Service, family or community member connected to the Service
- post offensive or derogatory comments or information that could bring their professional standing or that of the Service into disrepute
- use their personal camera or phones to take photos or video whilst at the Service.

### PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Staff members are to use their own personal discretion when adding a family of the Service as a 'friend' on Facebook or any other social media. The Service does not recommend that staff add families of the Service to personal social media accounts as they will still be seen as a representative of the Service and required to uphold the Service's Code of Conduct on all posts. It is extremely important not to post information about the Service, colleagues, children, or families on personal social media accounts, as this not only contravenes the Service policies and *Code of Conduct* but is considered a breach of the Commonwealth's *Privacy Act 1988* and *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

Families are asked to respect that staff may have a personal policy on adding families to personal social media accounts due to their professional philosophy, and that Highland Grove

asks staff to carefully consider whether they will have families as friends on their private account.

If adding families to personal social media accounts, educators will adhere to relevant policies, including the Code of Conduct of the Service.

## CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

For inappropriate conduct to be lawful, there is a need to demonstrate a connection between the behaviour and the employment relationship that:

- is likely to cause serious damage to the relationship between the employee and Service
- damages or harms the Service's interest or reputation
- is incompatible with the employee's duties in the education and care sector.

A person who has been involved in inappropriate conduct may require reprimand as per our *Code of Conduct Policy*. This may lead to disciplinary procedures or termination of their position.

## PARENTS/FAMILY MEMBERS and CAREGIVERS:

- Photographs or videos taken of any child other than their own, while taken on the preschool premises, will not be uploaded to any social media, including Facebook and Instagram.
- Photographs or videos taken of any staff member whilst on the preschool premises will not be uploaded to any social media without their permission. This includes special events inside and outside of preschool hours.
- Families and caregivers will not post negative or slandering comments on social media regarding staff, the centre, other parents or children. This would result in immediate cessation of your enrolment.

## CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Our Service will continue to evaluate and assess our online safety practices through critical reflections, checklists, professional learning and discussions with families and staff.

## RESOURCES

Australian Government Office of the eSafety commission [www.esafety.gov.au/early-years](http://www.esafety.gov.au/early-years)

eSafety Early Years Online safety for under 5s. <https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-02/Early-years-booklet.pdf>

eSafety Early Years Checklist <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/esafety-early-years-program-for-educators/checklist>

## SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Dictionary by Merriam-Webster

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).

eSafety Commissioner: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/esafety-early-years-program-for-educators>

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2023).

*Privacy Act 1988*.

*Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

**REVIEWED: Currently under review- March 2024**