

Precious Children Daycare's POLICY ON THE USE OF INTERNET AND PHOTOGRAPHIC AND RECORDING DEVICES WITH GUIDANCE

1. Rationale and Policy Considerations

Photographs, video and audio recordings are increasingly used to document children's learning and development, to support quality assurance and to communicate with families and learning communities.

The [Child Care Act 1991\(Early Years Services\) Regulations 2016](#) require a policy specifying:

- When, and in what circumstances and for what purpose, children are permitted access to the internet while attending the service – Children are permitted access to the internet while doing some educational and age centric technology activity.
- When, and in what circumstances and for what purpose, the use of photographic or recording devices is permitted in the service – to communicate with the parents and to keep a record of the child's learning experience.
- Who, and in what circumstances, can view, listen to or retain a photograph or recording of a child while attending the service – the parents and teacher to learn about the learning development.
- The form of the consent required to be given by a parent or guardian of a child before the child may be permitted access to the internet or be photographed or recorded in the service – Social Media Consent Form is signed by the parents.

The benefits of using the internet, photographic and recording devices for young children's learning and development are many and varied. Interactive media – when used safely and appropriately with adults – can enhance learning and help to prepare young children for positive use of technology.

Among the advantages for parents are that they can view and comment on records of activities and observations shared, and can add their own observations and/or videos of their child. They can be more informed and involved in their child's learning and development. In this way 'clear two-way channels of communication are fostered between the early-years setting, parents, families and children.' ([EYEI, Department of Education and Skills](#))

The advantages for service providers of online interactive media in parent involvement include:

- Providing an effective form of communication with parents.
- Linking the children's progress and development from home to the service and vice versa.
- Connecting the child's learning and development to [Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework](#).

The many benefits of the use of technology, online interactive media and electronic information sharing need to be balanced with the rights of children, families and staff members to privacy, personal integrity and dignity, and the risks that can be associated with the use of such devices and media. The registered provider has the overall responsibility to ensure that online safety is fully considered. They must ensure that a clear policy and procedures are written and that these are made available to all relevant stakeholders. A Data Controller and a deputy Data Controller need to be assigned to take responsibility for the collection, storage and use of all personal data including images (photos and video). Recognisable images captured by CCTV systems are also personal data. They are therefore subject to the provisions of the [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) 2018](#).

Frequency and duration of the use of technology are also important considerations for a policy. Technology and interactive media should not take the place of everyday real interactions such as active play with adults and peers, especially outdoor activities, and the face-to-face social interactions and experiences that are essential for a child's holistic development.

Early years staff must also consider the quality of the content, the purpose for which it is used and the way it is used. Technology can be used to supplement real-world interactions – for instance, by using an app on an outing, doing research on what children saw while they were on the outing and/or recapping what they experienced – but never to replace real face-to-face interactions. New technology and interactive media need to be reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Legislation and regulatory requirements

- Regulation 10 of the [Child Care Act 1991\(Early Years Services\) Regulations 2016](#) requires that services have a Policy and Procedures on the Use of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices. Regulation 17 requires that parents be provided with information about the service's policy on the Use of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) 2018](#)
- Children First: this refers to [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017](#) and the [Children First Act 2015](#).
- [Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People](#) 2002
- [Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework](#) (QRF)

Children's needs

Young children need:

- Opportunities to learn, explore, play and communicate through a wide range of approaches. For children **over** two years¹ this includes the use of technology.
- Safe, monitored and well-supervised access to the most appropriate technologies to support their learning and development.
- The interactive media to which they have access to be tried and tested by their educators (staff and parents) to ensure that it supports their learning goals and is safe and appropriate to their stage of development.
- Positive role models for safe and careful use of technology.
- The adults who take images and recordings, to take appropriate care in the use of these images, how and with whom they are shared and their storage and disposal.

Children also need and are entitled to be asked for their agreement for images (still and moving) and recordings of them to be taken, as soon as they are old enough. They are entitled to choose not to have their photo taken or to be video recorded, and to have their choice respected.

Parents'/Families' needs

Parents/guardians need:

- To be fully informed about what interactive media their child may have access to in the service and how it will be used to support their learning and development.
- To be asked for informed consent for their child to access interactive media and for any still or moving images or recordings of their child to be taken, displayed/shown, stored or posted online.
- To know what purposes their child's image (still or moving) may be used for and in what way they may be used.
- To know that the service will choose appropriate, quality, beneficial media for their child's learning and will monitor and closely supervise their use.
- Equal and easy access to efficient and effective means of involvement and engagement with their child's learning and development while they are in the service.

(If information is generally shared online with parents/guardians and some do not have access to online media, they will need to have equal access to this information)/ If a parent does not have access to internet facility, we let them know by posting the information on the communication board which is their for parent to look for or tell them when they come to collect the child.

Staff needs

Staff members need:

- To have a clear and agreed understanding of the benefits and risks of interactive media and technology for use in the service – both for supporting children's learning and development and for facilitating parents' involvement.

¹ With regard to children under 2 years, consider the information below in the guidance attached to this document on page 16. It is from The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, Policy Brief on Early Learning and Use of Technology, Washington, D.C., (2016)

- To be in a position to safely and securely use a range of technological resources to manage their roles as professionals.
- To research information and resources and communicate professionally.
- To use systems to track and record the children's development and to share their work.
- To communicate with parents/guardians/carers through newsletters, email or other interactive media.
- To be able to manage administrative tasks and systems.

These require clear rules, guidelines and agreements regarding safe, appropriate and acceptable use of technology and interactive media.

Staff members also need:

- To recognise and accept both the benefits and the risks of using interactive media.
- Clarity on their roles and responsibilities in relation to their use.
- Knowledge about online safety.

Management needs

Management needs:

- To ensure that:
 - The regulatory requirement (Regulation 10) to provide a Policy on the Use of the Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices is met.
 - Their duty of care to provide the children who use their service with an adequate level of protection against harm through the use of technology is met.
 - All staff members are clear on their roles and responsibilities in relation to the safe and appropriate use of technology and interactive media in the service.
 - All content posted online on sites administered by the service is done with the safety, privacy and security of the children, families and staff members as primary considerations.
 - Parents/guardians are aware of the policy and procedures relating to the use of the internet and photographic and recording devices in the service.
 - Appropriate written consents are obtained for the children's use of the internet and the use of any photographic or recorded materials.
 - All parents/guardians have equal access to communications with the service.
- To know that the early years staff have the knowledge, information and guidance that they need to safely use technology and interactive media with the children in a way that is appropriate for each child's stage of learning and development and for their particular needs.

National Quality Frameworks

- [Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework](#)
- [Síolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education](#)
- [Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework](#)

2. Definitions/Glossary

[Include definitions here of any words used that may need explanation.]

Technology	This refers broadly to both hardware that enables connectivity and devices (including television and handheld devices such as smartphones and tablets), content (including digital media such as apps, games, software and television programming), and assistive technology devices.
Interactive media	This refers to digital and analogue materials, including software programmes, 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 engagement with other children and adults.
Social media	Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

3. **Policy Statement** *[The Policy Statement outlines the principles, values and the purpose of the policy. It will generally be quite short.]* Precious Children Daycare Limited uses the internet, photographic and recording devices to support the provision of a quality service for children and families. A Parent/Guardian Consent Form known as Social Media Acceptance Form is provided by the service and must be completed and signed along with the admission form before their photo or moving images taken or posted anywhere. *The Policy Statement can be included in the Parents/Guardians Handbook.*

[This is not a complete Policy Statement. It has been left to service providers to complete their own Policy Statement. You will need to complete this to state clearly what your service policy on the Use of the Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices is.]

[It is recommended that as part of your Policy Statement you consider the rationale and policy considerations outlined above. There is additional guidance at the end of this document (See page 16).]

The following wording is also suggested for inclusion:]

Precious Children Daycare Ltd uses the internet, photographic and recording devices to support the provision of a quality service for children and families.

Parents/guardians are fully informed where technology is used as part of the curriculum or programme and how the internet is used as a learning tool within the service.

A Parent/Guardian Consent Form *Social Media Acceptance Form* is provided by the service and must be completed and signed before any child can access the internet or has their photo or moving images taken or posted anywhere.

Photography and recording of children will only take place

- When at least one other adult is present [*Except in the case of a sole operator*].
- When the child or group of children agrees to be photographed.

Digital equipment remains in the service at all times and is stored securely when not in use.

Images in hard copy are returned to parents and images are deleted from digital records when children leave the service [**outline a specific timeframe**] in accordance with GDPR requirements [*Please see note on this in 'How to Use the Policy Samples and Templates' on [Tusla](#) and [Barnardos](#) websites.*].

Photography and recording of children while they are in the service by any parent must only be with the consent of management and other parents.

All use of the internet, photographic and recording devices will be considered within our risk assessment process.

We do our best to ensure that all parents have the same level of access to information shared about their child's learning and development while in the service.

Images and recordings are stored safely and appropriately returned to parents and/or disposed of/deleted when no longer needed for the purpose for which they were taken.

We request that photos or images taken of children while attending the setting are not posted elsewhere by others without the consent of parents/guardians.

Non-staff photographers are never allowed to have unsupervised access to children.

4. Procedures & Practices [*Outlines the specific steps and/or guidance to be followed in order to implement the policy.*]

Parents/guardians need to be asked for informed consent for their child to access interactive media and for any still or moving images or recordings of their child to be taken, displayed/ shown, stored or posted online. Parents are asked to sign a Social Media Acceptance Form which is part of the registration.

We also have permission slips which have been signed to confirm Photos can be taken of each child.

Should there be a request for no photos of a certain individual this child's names must be highlighted to all staff and a note on all files. If a parent doesn't want the photo to be taken, in group photos if any taken it has to be blurred or the face has to be hidden for the purpose of hiding his face.

The photographs and videos will solely be used for the purpose of communication with the parents.

Photographs are taken only on school mobiles/Tablets and deleted after it has been communicated to the parents.

Staff are not allowed to take any picture of the children on their mobile, they have to use the school mobile or school tablet only, the designated school mobile and the tablets always remains in the service at all times and is stored securely when not in use. The authorised person to take photos are the room leader or the Manager of the school.

We do our best to ensure that all parents have the same level of access to information share about their child's learning and development while in the service. Images and recordings are stored safely and appropriately returned to parents and/or disposed of when no longer needed for the purpose for which they were taken. We request that photos or images taken of children while attending the setting are not posted elsewhere by others without the consent of parents/guardians.

Staff members also need to have clarity on their roles and responsibilities in relation to the use of online technology and online safety.

During the school hours internet will be used only for educational purpose and for relaxation time for children on the school mobile.

Parents can access all the relevant Policies and Forms on the school's website, which can be downloaded from there.

A summary of this policy will be included in the Parent Handbook. This policy will also be reviewed with the staff team at induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents in the Policy Handbook located in the Service Information Pack and available on the school website

Parents may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents and the staff team will receive written notification of any updates.

This policy must be observed by all managers and all staff members.

Where any employee, contractor, volunteer, student or member of a committee/group becomes aware of an act of non-compliance with this policy, they have a responsibility to bring it to the attention of the *[owner/manager]*.

All staff members will complete and sign a Staff e-Safety Acceptable Use Agreement.

See the relevant appendix of the [Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework](#) for the core elements that this must include. There is also more general guidance and areas to consider for developing both the Policy Statement (above) and these Procedures, attached here with this template on page 16 – you can use this guidance to help further develop content for both your Policy Statement and the Procedures.]

Some suggested section headings and content follows below:

Access to the internet by children

[If children do have access, include:

- *When children have access – Children have access to internet while doing their educational and art activity under guided supervision.*
- *The purpose of their access for enhancing their knowledge.*
- *The criteria for their being given access such as suitability of software, online filters, online safety – children are given access to the relevant topics related to their educational purpose under supervision of the teacher and allocated time.*

Use of photographic and recording devices in the service

- *Who in the service can photograph or record children – teacher in the room and the team members*
- *When, for what purpose photos and/or recording will be used – for communication with the parents and for the child's learning record.*
- *The purposes for which photos and/or recordings may be used in the service: Consider the possible uses for photos and recordings and also include these in a Parent/Guardian Consent Form. Set out the list here, e.g. the possible uses include (but are not be limited to):*
 - *To document children's learning and development.*
 - *To communicate with families.*
 - *To record evidence in the event of an accident/incident involving a child.*
 - *For security, for example, closed circuit television monitoring of the service (CCTV).*
 - *For safety, for example, group photograph on outings for speedy identification of individuals in the case of any incident.*
 - *To support quality assurance, for example, in the Síolta Quality Assurance Programme.*
 - *Local news or online social media, for example, local newspaper, Facebook etc].*

[Also set out the details under the following headings:]

Who can view, listen, or retain photographs or recordings of a child.

- *In what circumstances: for safety and wellbeing of the children's welfare.*
- *For what purpose: for the observation and communication related to the child*
- *How long photographs or recordings will be kept and how they will be stored: until the school term end and its saved in the tablet devices.*
- *How they will be dealt with when no longer needed: they are deleted after the school term ends*

Form of parent/guardian consent

Signed informed consent must be obtained for each child from their parent/guardian to access the internet, be photographed or recorded in accordance with this policy.

The parent/guardian consent form must include:

- When, in what circumstances and for what purpose the child is permitted access to the internet.
- When, in what circumstances and for what purpose the child will be photographed (see sample list of uses above).
- When, in what circumstances, in what way and for what purpose the child's activity and/or voice will be recorded (see sample list above).
- Consent for photographs and videos to be taken of children – include specific information about how the photos/video will be used and displayed.
- How and with whom images and/or recordings will be shared, including with other parents in the service, for example, a video recording of a group activity, an event or a performance.
- That CCTV use will be in compliance with Data Protection requirements.
- How images on record will be dealt with when their child leaves the service.

The completed Parent/Guardian Consent Forms must be retained on the child's individual file.

Children's agreement

Where possible, in addition to parents' consent, children's agreement is obtained to:

- Take their photograph.
- Record or use their voice and/or activity.
- Display or share their photos or recordings.

Use of personal devices in the service

- Staff members, families, contractors and visitors may bring personal devices into the service.

In order to protect children's and adults' personal and privacy rights, include the following:

- Personal 'smart' devices, such as phones or tablets, will not be used in the presence of children and will be switched off during working hours, except at break time in designated areas.
- Staff members will not take any images, video/audio recording of children or families at the service, on their personal devices.
- Children are not allowed to bring personal 'smart' devices, such as phones or tablets to the service.
- When visiting the service, parents or other visitors may not use personal 'smart' devices, such as phones or tablets, to take photos or videos or engage with children other than their own child.

Additional safeguards

- Appropriate filters are applied to all equipment used by children.
- If Computers are used by children, they are located in an open space with the monitor clearly visible.
- Children's names must not be used in photograph captions.
- Photography and recording including, closed circuit television is not undertaken in areas where children change their clothes, toilet, or have their clothes and/or nappy changed.
- Only images of children in suitable clothing are to be taken to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. (Some activities, for example swimming and drama, present a much greater risk of potential misuse.)

[Address how images of children on the service's website (if you have one) can be misused. Images accompanied by personal information, such as the name of a child and their hobby, could be used to learn more about a child prior to grooming them for abuse.]

State written expectations of professional photographers or the press who are invited to an event. These should make clear the service's expectations of them in relation to child protection.]

We make sure that there is no name or any details of the child on the facebook, Instagram or website which says anything about any child in particular which can land the child in any problem in future.

Use of CCTV

[For information see <https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/Data-Protection-CCTV/m/242.htm>

A sample CCTV policy for schools which may be helpful is available at <http://dataprotectionschools.ie/en/Resources/>]

Storing images and recordings securely

- Images or video recordings of children must be kept securely. Hard copies of images must be kept in a secured cabinet and electronic images stored in a protected folder with restricted/password protected access.
- Images and recordings will be retained with the child's individual file.
- Images must not be stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones.

- Personal equipment must not be used to store photos and recordings of children, and only cameras or devices belonging to the service should be used.
- Digital equipment must remain within the service at all times (this includes appropriate use on outings) and be stored securely when not in use.

[When storing and using photographs to identify children or adults for official purposes, such as identity cards, ensure they are complying with the legal requirements for handling personal information.]

[Further guidance on GDPR and Data Protection requirements can be found on www.dataprotection.ie]

[Ensure that staff members are aware of the service's expectations around their use of social networking sites for example:

- *They have considered the information given about them and images displayed of them available on their sites and are confident that these represent them in a light acceptable to their role in working with children and parents.*
- *They do not have children in the service as 'friends' on their personal/private sites.*
- *Comments on their site about the service, work colleagues or children, if published, would not cause hurt or embarrassment to others, risk claims of libel, or harm the children, the reputation of the service or their colleagues.*

For a Sample Early Years Staff Conduct Agreement see Appendix 3.]

[See [Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework](#) as well as further guidance below at page 16 to ensure all other necessary areas of practice are considered in this section.]

5. Communication Plan *[For staff & families]*

All parents are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding the **Use of the Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices** on enrolment. Staff members will check with parents that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

A summary of this policy will be included in the Parent Handbook. This policy will also be reviewed with the staff team at induction and annual staff training.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents in the Policy Handbook located in the Service Information Pack and available on the school website

Parents may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents and the staff team will receive written notification of any updates.

A copy of all policies will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents in the Policy Folder located in the Service Information Pack and available on the school website.

Parents/guardians may receive a copy of the policy at any time upon request.

Parents and staff will receive written notification of any updates.

6. Related Policies, Procedures and Forms *[List of all related documents. The policies in bold are those required under the Early Years Regulations 2016.]*

- **Safety Statement**
- **Risk Management Policy**
- Admissions/Enrolment Policy
- Partnership with Parents Policy
- Interactions Policy
- Communication Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Parent/Guardian Consent to Use of the Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices Form

[See below guidance for information on what must be included in this form]

[See also other Sample Forms in Appendix below – include titles here of any forms used in relation to this policy in your service]

7. References/Supporting Documents/Related Legislation *[List of any relevant Legislation and Practice Guides referred to in drafting the Policy]*

- [Tusla Quality and Regulatory Framework](#)
- [Síolta, the National Framework for Quality in Early Childhood Education](#)
- [Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework](#)
- [Aistear Síolta Practice Guide](#)
- [A Guide to Early Years Education Inspection \(EYEI\) in Early Years Settings Participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education \(ECCE\) Programme](#)

8. Who Must Observe This Policy

This policy must be observed by all managers and all staff members.

Where any employee, contractor, volunteer, student or member of a committee/group becomes aware of an act of non-compliance with this policy, they have a responsibility to bring it to the attention of the *owner/manager*.

All staff members will complete and sign a Sample Staff e-Safety Acceptable Use Agreement.

9. Actions to be followed if the Policy is not implemented

[Add in any relevant actions to be taken]

If you, as a staff member or a parent, consider that this policy is not being implemented, you can follow the Complaints Policy and Procedure to make a complaint.

10. Contact Information *[Who to contact for more information]*

If you need more information about this policy, contact:

Name	Caroline Cummins
Phone number or email	info@preciouschildrendaycare.ie

11. Policy Created

Date this policy was created	20 th July 2020
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12. Signatures

	Name and position	Signature
Approved by	Caroline Cummins	Manager
Approved by		

13. Review Date

Date this policy will be reviewed	2 nd May 2023
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Appendix 1: Staff e-Safety Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA)²

In order to support your practice in developing the children's knowledge and understanding about e-safety, please read and agree to the following:

- I understand, accept and agree to adhere to the Precious Children Daycare Ltd Policy on the Use of Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices
- I understand it is my responsibility to ensure safe and responsible use of technology within Precious Children Daycare Ltd
- I understand that Precious Children Daycare Ltd technology is primarily intended for educational use and that I will only use the systems for personal and recreational use within the policies and rules set down by the setting
- I will immediately report any illegal, inappropriate or harmful material or incident I become aware of to the Manager
- I will only use chat and social networking sites in accordance with the setting's policies
- I will not engage in any online activities that may compromise my professional responsibilities
- I will only communicate with parents/guardians, carers and other professionals using official systems. Any such communication must be professional in tone and manner
- I understand that if I fail to comply with this AUA I could be subject to disciplinary action

I have read and understood the above and agree to use Precious Children Daycare Ltd systems, both in and out of the setting, and my own devices, within these guidelines.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

² Adapted from an e-Safety and Social Media Toolkit for Early Years Settings Early Years Services August 2014
Version 1.0 Entrust Early Years Services, Kingston Centre, Fairway, Stafford, ST16 3TW

Appendix 2: Setting Social Media Conduct Agreement³

We require you to sign and agree to follow the Conduct Agreement for using Precious Children Daycare Ltd social media communication platforms to ensure clear boundaries between Precious Children Daycare Ltd and home are followed.

Social Media Platform: Instagram or Facebook or Whatsapp

I agree:

- To follow the social media policy and not bring Precious Children Daycare Ltd into disrepute
- To observe confidentiality by not discussing other children, parents or staff members
- Not to share, tag, post or copy any information from Precious Children Daycare Ltd social media platform without prior permission from the management
- To keep my professional and personal life separate and not accept children, parents, guardians or carers as 'friends' on my personal page
- To consider how my social conduct may be perceived by others and how this could affect my own reputation and that of Precious Children Daycare Ltd
- To report any known breaches of the above to the designated person for safeguarding (Caroline Cummins) and the social media administrator (Caroline Cummins).
- I understand I am in a position of trust and my actions could be misinterpreted by others and I am conscious of this when sharing information with others on the social media platform site belonging to Precious Children Daycare Ltd.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

³ Adapted from An e-Safety and Social Media Toolkit for Early Years Settings Early Years Services August 2014
Version 1.0 Entrust Early Years Services, Kingston Centre, Fairway, Stafford, ST16 3TW

Appendix 3: Early Years Staff Conduct Agreement⁴

We acknowledge that staff members will use digital technologies in their personal and social lives so we require them to sign the following Professional Conduct Agreement to ensure clear boundaries between their home and professional roles.

I agree that through my recreational use of social networking sites or other online technologies I will:

- Not bring Precious Children Daycare Ltd into disrepute
- Observe confidentiality and refrain from discussing any issues relating to work
- Not share or post in an open forum, any information that I would not want children, parents, guardians, carers or colleagues to view
- Set privacy settings to block unauthorised access to my social networking page and to restrict those who are able to receive updates
- Keep my professional and personal life separate and not accept children and parents, guardians or carers from the service as 'friends'
- Consider how my social conduct may be perceived by others and how this could affect my own reputation and that of the Precious Children Daycare Ltd
- Either avoid using a profile photograph or ensure it is an image I would be happy to share with anyone
- Report any known breaches of the above
- I understand I am in a position of trust and my actions outside of my professional environment could be misinterpreted by others, and I am conscious of this when sharing information publicly with others

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

⁴ An e-Safety and Social Media Toolkit for Early Years Settings Early Years Services August 2014 Version 1.0
Entrust Early Years Services, Kingston Centre, Fairway, Stafford, ST16 3TW

Additional Guidance and further Considerations for Developing this Policy and Procedures

The following pages provide some additional information and guidance that is worthwhile considering as you develop your own service policy.

These include:

- 1. Guidance on the duty of care in relation to the Use of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices**
- 2. Information relating to the use of technology by children under 2 years from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, Policy Brief on Early Learning and Use of Technology, Washington, D.C., (2016)**
- 3. An extract from a Joint Position Statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College (2012)**
- 4. Social Media Considerations**
- 5. Information relating to the Risks of Photographing and Filming at Events and Activities from the NSPCC U.K.**
- 6. Some Guiding Principles on the use of Technology from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology**
- 7. A list of Resources for Further Information**

[1. Guidance on the Duty of Care in relation use the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices](#)

The general *duty of care* principle is that you should not harm those people to whom you owe a duty of care by your acts or omissions. In the education and care context, duty of care refers to the responsibility of carers and educators to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is their duty to take reasonable care to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of injury. The standard of care owed by care and education providers to children and young people is very high. Early years service providers also have a duty of care to the families who use their service and to staff members.

In their relationships with children, carers and educators are required to ensure that the physical and psychological wellbeing of children and young people is safeguarded, and that their own behaviour is guided by this duty of care both within and outside the early years setting.

This duty of care particularly relates to staff members':

- own conduct
- intervening in the inappropriate conduct of other adults
- reporting unprofessional behaviour of other adults if they observe or are made aware of such behaviour

All adults who are working with children must be aware of their personal and professional conduct when using interactive media and social media in particular. It is essential to consider what information is published to ensure confidentiality is observed at all times and the service is not brought into disrepute. Content can be easily shared online and circulated widely without consent or knowledge, possibly resulting in disciplinary, civil or criminal consequences.

Professional boundary violations by a staff member represents a breach of trust, a failure to meet their duty of care to children and families and a failure to follow the conduct requirements of the employer.

The following are examples of violations:

- Email, social media, and internet postings using the service technology or media that are unrelated to the staff member's role, without the manager's consent.
- Allowing children access to a staff member's personal internet locations (e.g. social networking sites).
- Uploading or publishing still or moving images or audio recordings of children and young people to any location, without parents'/guardians' and manager's consent.
- Correspondence of a personal nature via social media, internet postings.
- Creating or using private online chat rooms.
- Filming or recording for the use of addressing behaviour issues without the manager's and parents' or guardians' consent.

When a staff member violates boundaries they risk:

- Serious and harmful consequences for the child
- Seriously undermining the learning process
- Seriously undermining their professional reputation and the confidence of the care and education sector in their suitability to work with children
- Formal directions or other disciplinary action from their employer
- Termination of employment
- Criminal charges

Failure to report a boundary violation may also be subject to disciplinary action.

2. Information relating to the use of technology by children under 2 years from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, Policy Brief on Early Learning and Use of Technology, Washington, D.C., (2016)

Research shows that unstructured playtime is particularly important for infants and toddlers because they learn more quickly through interactions with the real world than they do through media use and, at such a young age, they have limited periods of awake time.

At this age, children require hands-on exploration and social interaction with trusted caregivers to develop their cognitive, language, motor, and social-emotional skills. Research also shows that children aged 0-2 should not watch media or use technology alone.



Children aged 12-24 months can learn from videos if parents co-view material with them and use the video as a learning tool to build language skills.

Some studies have shown that children in this age range can learn from videos, but do not retain information as long as comparison groups who learned the same material using books with their parents did.

When video chatting, children under 16 months show no learning gains, though there may be a benefit in promoting bonding when physical distance limits frequent in-person interactions. Based on this research – for children under the age of 2, technology use in early learning settings is discouraged.

3. Extract from a joint position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media at Saint Vincent College (2012)

The following extracts from this position statement may be helpful when considering what your policy on the Use of the Internet, Photographic and Recording Devices needs to include:

“Access to technology tools and interactive media should not exclude, diminish, or interfere with children’s healthy communication, social interactions, play, and other developmentally appropriate activities with peers, family members, and teachers.”

“Technology and media are tools that are effective only when used appropriately. Technology should not be used for activities that are not educationally sound, not developmentally appropriate, or not effective (for example electronic worksheets for preschool children). **Passive use of technology and any type of screen media is an inappropriate replacement for active play, engagement with other children, and interactions with adults.** Digitally literate educators who are grounded in child development theory and developmentally appropriate practices have the knowledge, skills, and experience to select and use technology tools and interactive media that suit the ages and developmental levels of the children in their care, and they know when and how to integrate technology into the program effectively. Educators who lack technology skills and digital literacy are at risk of making inappropriate choices and using technology with young children in ways that can negatively impact learning and development.”

“Technology tools can help educators make and strengthen home-setting connections. With technology becoming more prevalent as a means of sharing information and communicating with one another, early childhood educators have an opportunity to build stronger relationships with parents and enhance family engagement. Early childhood educators always have had a responsibility to support parents and families by sharing knowledge about child development and learning.

Technology tools offer opportunities for educators to build relationships, maintain ongoing communication, and exchange information and share online resources with parents and families. Likewise, parents and families can use technology to ask questions, seek advice, share information about their child, and feel more engaged in the program and their child's experiences there... educators have a responsibility to parents and families to model appropriate, effective, and positive uses of technology, media, methods of communication, and social media that are safe, secure, healthy, acceptable, responsible, and ethical...

Displaying photos in the classroom of children's drawings or block buildings, along with narratives dictated by the children or explanations of why these types of play are important, can help families understand the critical role of play in early childhood development. Sending weekly, monthly, or even daily updates through social media or e-mail can help families feel more connected to their children and their activities away from home. Inviting children to take a picture of something they have done and helping them upload the photo to a file that can be e-mailed promotes children's understanding of ways to communicate with others while also contributing to their learning more about the functions of reading and writing."

"Technology and media literacy are essential for the adults who work with young children. The prevalence of technology and media in the daily lives of young children and their families – in their learning and in their work – will continue to increase and expand in more ways than we can predict. Early childhood educators need to understand that technology and media-based materials can vary widely in quality, and they must be able to effectively identify products that help rather than hinder early learning (NAEYC 2009a).

For the adults who work with young children, digital literacy includes both knowledge and competence. Educators need the understanding, skills, and ability to use technology and interactive media to access information, communicate with other professionals, and participate in professional development to improve learning and prepare young children for a lifetime of technology use. Digital and media literacy for educators means that they have the knowledge and experience to think critically about the selection, analysis, use, and evaluation of technology and media for young children in order to evaluate their impact on learning and development."

4. Social Media Considerations

There are many legitimate social media spaces that can be used effectively as part of teaching and learning programmes to facilitate children and young people's learning. These digital forums need to be completely separate from staff personal virtual spaces and staff members should consider the following questions prior to using them:

- How can I use these social media tools appropriately?

- What are the risks?
- What will be the benefits for the child/children?
- What protocols or permissions need to be considered?
- Are these approved tools?
- Have parents or guardians been informed?
- Is it possible that the consequences of my actions will have negative outcomes for the children?
- Is it possible that the consequences of my actions will negatively affect people's confidence in my suitability to work with children?

Adults in education and care settings are expected to model responsible and respectful conduct to the children and young people with whom they work. Early years educators need to consider the electronic social environments they use as part of this community and their employer's expectation.

The internet does not provide the privacy or control assumed by many users. Staff members must appreciate that no matter what protections they place around access to their personal sites, their digital postings are still at risk of reaching an unintended audience and being used in ways that could complicate or threaten their employment.

[Suggestions to consider in relation to the use of social media](#)

- Create a Social Media Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and involve parents/guardians in developing and reviewing it.
- Ensure users sign the setting's Social Media Acceptable Use Agreement (see sample in Appendix 2).
- Create an account using the setting's email address and contact details.
- Complete a risk assessment specifically for use of social media.
- Ensure all staff members have an awareness of how sites work and their different security settings and functions.
- Pilot the social networking site to ensure safety and suitability.
- Designate a named staff member who is knowledgeable to administer and monitor the account.
- Promote positive use of new and emerging technologies.

Social media and Risk Assessment

CAUTION When using social media...

"If it is online - it can be found.

If you delete it - it can still be found.

Even if you secure it - it can still be accessed."

Tim Scully - Head of Cyber Security Operations Centre
Department of Defence, Commonwealth of Australia

Activities on social media websites should be considered public activities. Despite the availability of privacy functions on social media websites, the possibility exists for content to be shared beyond intended recipients. The terms and conditions of use for most social media sites state that all content becomes the property of the site on which it is posted.

Online content is also essentially permanent – this must also be taken into consideration when outlining procedures for interactive media use in the service and when carrying out the service risk assessment.

(Social Media Guidance for Agencies and Staff, Government of South Australia - see full reference in Information Resources list below)

5. Risks of photography and filming at events and activities

(Adapted from <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/photography-sharing-images-guidance/>)

It is important that children and young people feel happy with their achievements and have photographs and film of their special moments. Family and friends also want to be able to share in the activities and experiences of their children when they have been part of a special occasion, event or activity.

However, it is also important to be aware of child protection and safeguarding issues when people are taking photos or filming at events. The potential for misuse of images can be reduced through awareness of the potential risks and dangers, and appropriate measures being put in place.

Some of the potential risks include:

- Children may be identifiable when a photograph is shared with personal information. This could potentially pose a risk of inappropriate contact by individuals. (Children's names must not be displayed alongside their images.)
- Direct and indirect risks to children and young people when photographs are shared on websites and in publications with personal information.
- Inappropriate photographs or recorded images of children.
- Inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images.
- Images may be altered and distorted.

6. Guiding Principles from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, Policy Brief on Early Learning and Use of Technology, Washington, D.C., (2016) states that early learning settings should strive to ensure that technology, when used, is applied in ways that promote children's learning and healthy

development and identifies four principles for use of technology with early learners that are worth considering when developing your policy in this area. These are as follows:

Guiding Principle 1: Technology – when used appropriately – can be a tool for learning

Early learners can use technology to explore new worlds, make believe, and actively engage in fun and challenging activities. They can learn about technology and technology tools and use them to play, solve problems, and role play.

Guiding Principle 2: Technology should be used to increase access to learning opportunities for all children.

For children who may not have access to devices or the internet at home, early childhood settings provide opportunities to learn how to use these tools more actively. When used appropriately, technology has the potential to help learners of all ages and abilities fully engage in learning by providing greater access to curriculum and improving learning outcomes.

Guiding Principle 3: Technology may be used to strengthen relationships among parents, families, early educators, and young children

Technology should not be used to replace meaningful face-to-face interactions. Precautions should be taken to ensure that technology use does not impede the development of healthy, authentic interactions with adults and peers.

Guiding Principle 4: Technology is more effective for learning when adults and peers interact or co-view with young children

There are many ways that adult involvement can make learning more effective for young children using technology. For example, an adult can engage the child in an activity that extends learning such as singing a song they learned while viewing the content or connecting the content to the world.

7. Resources for Further Information

Early Childhood Ireland's Guidelines <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/operating-childcare-service/guidelines-on-using-imagesvideo-of-children/>

Online Compass <https://onlinecompass.org.uk/>

<http://dataprotectionschools.ie/en/Resources/>

An e-Safety and Social Media Toolkit for Early Years Settings Early Years Services August 2014 Version 1.0 Entrust Early Years Services, Kingston Centre, Fairway, Stafford, ST16 3TW

Haughton, C. Aiken, M. and Cheevers, C. (2015) 'Cyber Babies: The Impact of Emerging Technology on the Developing Infant', Psychology Research, 5(9), 504-518, available: <http://www.davidpublisher.org/Public/uploads/Contribute/5643e8fa5b797.pdf>



Epstein, A.S. (2015) 'Using Technology Appropriately in the Preschool Classroom', Child Care Exchange, available:

<https://ccie-media.s3.amazonaws.com/exchange/m001-exchange/m001-exchangefocus.pdf>

Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs

Serving Children from Birth through Age 8: A joint position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College 2012

Richards, Ron; Bower, Peter and Corish, Ken **Online Safety: A toolkit for Early Years Settings** South West Grid for Learning E-Safety Group May 2012

Guideline Social Media June 2015 File Number: 11839/2011-1 Government of South Australia Department for Education and Child Development (DECD)

Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people: Guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings 2017 Department for Education and Child Development, Catholic Education South Australia, Association of Independent Schools of South Australia.

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, **Policy Brief on Early Learning and Use of Technology**, Washington, D.C. (2016)