

# 2.22V E-SAFETY FOR CHILDREN

QUALITY AREA 2 | VERSION 1.0

## PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines for LEVNT EC Services to:

- provide a safe online environment for all children which ensures their safety, health and wellbeing
- support young children to develop an understanding of digital networks and to using digital networks in safe and appropriate ways
- incorporate technology into early 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

LEVNT EC Services are 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 to learn safely
- always acting in the best interests of each child and having zero tolerance of online abuse
- supporting families in creating a safe on-line environment both at home and at the service.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, parents/guardians, student educators, volunteers and contractors attending LEVNT EC Services.

### 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 how to use technology in appropriate ways.

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

way. However, all children have the right to actively participate online, this includes the right to be heard, the right to be respected and the right to feel safe.

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.

## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms refer to the Definitions file of each LEVNT EC policy folder.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Interactive media:** Refers to digital and analog materials, including software programs, applications (apps), broadcast and streaming media, some children's television programming, e-books, the Internet, and other forms of content designed to facilitate active and creative use by young children and to encourage social engagement with other children and adults.

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

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

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

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

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

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider, persons with management and control, nominated supervisor and/or persons in day-to-day charge are responsible for meeting requirements set out in the table below. Actions which are legislated requirements of the ECEC sector are indicated with **LR**.

	Approved Provider and/or persons with management and control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents, guardians and carers	Contractors, volunteers and those on student placement
Designating a staff member/s to champion online safety and be a first point of contact for early childhood teachers, educators, staff, parents/guardians and children to report online safety issues	LR	✓			
Ensuring the online environment is used in accordance with Code of Conduct, Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing and Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy	LR	LR	✓		✓
Ensuring that early childhood teachers and educators are aware of and compliant with Information and Communication Technology and Privacy and Confidentiality policies	LR	LR			
Ensuring safety procedures are developed and implemented when using digital communication platforms with children and their families	LR	LR	✓		✓
Ensuring when using digital documentation platforms, early childhood teachers and educators consider the security of their digital data and the privacy of children and families (refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Information and Communication Technology Policy)	LR	LR	✓		✓
Ensuring there are procedures and processes around the capturing, storing and sharing of children's images and videos (refer to Information and Communication Technology and Privacy and Confidentiality policy)	LR	LR	✓	✓	✓
Creating a shared understanding between LEVNT EC Services, families, early childhood teachers and educators about digital technology use, by adults, in front of children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring that appropriate filtering and monitoring are in place for all devices used at the service	LR	LR	✓		✓
Reviewing online safety education annually to identify strengths and weaknesses and update to ensure relevance to online safety issues, risks, and harms	LR	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring parents/guardians are involved in the development and review of the eSafety policy	LR	✓		✓	
Providing families with information on where to go for help with online safety issues, including the eSafety Commissioner	✓	✓	✓		✓
Regularly discussing concepts of 'being online' or 'the internet' and online safety with children		✓	✓	✓	✓
Providing children with the opportunity to engage with digital platforms for learning through communicating, creating and consuming digital content in safe and age-appropriate ways	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Approved Provider and/or persons with management and control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents, guardians and carers	Contractors, volunteers and those on student placement
Providing proactive supervision when young children are using digital technology (refer to Supervision of Children policy)	LR	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teaching digital citizenship and digital/media literacy to support critical thinking		✓	✓		✓
Providing opportunities for children to explore and experiment with the functions of a diverse range of digital technologies alongside adult modelling and instruction in digital technology use		✓	✓		✓
Considering the needs of all children including those with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, 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	LR	✓	✓		✓
Modelling self-regulated 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 strive to meet their needs for online safety education inclusive of gender, age, culture, ability, appearance, socioeconomic status, family background, geographical location, and access	LR	LR	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring processes are in place to ensure children and parents/guardian who speak languages other than English understand this policy	LR	✓			
Upholding children's rights to provision, participation and protection in digital environments	LR	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring children know what to do if they encounter inappropriate materials online	LR	✓	✓		✓
Asking children their permission before taking photos or videos	✓	✓	✓		✓
Implementing the uses of technologies in everyday life and use real or imaginary technologies as props in children's play		✓	✓		✓
Providing digital technology experiences for young children that promote movement opportunities ie. yoga, dance, music, relaxation/meditation		✓	✓		✓
Ensuring that screen-based digital technology use while sitting is only for short periods and does not replace periods of active physical movement		✓	✓		✓
Developing strategies for families to communicate and raise online issues	LR	LR			

## EVALUATION

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

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues arising from this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of a policy review cycle, or as required
- notify 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

## AUTHORISATION & REVIEW

This policy was adopted by Lutheran Education VIC, NSW, TAS and ACT Ltd as Approved Provider for this service on 16 March 2023.

**REVIEW DATE** August 2024 or earlier as required.

## REFERENCES

### LEGISLATION & 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)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

### 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

- 1.02V Curriculum Development
- 1.03V Inclusion and Equity
- 2.11V Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- 2.14V Supervision of Children
- 3.02V Occupational Health and Safety
- 5.01V Interactions with Children
- 6.01V Enrolment and Orientation
- 7.02V Privacy and Confidentiality
- 7.04V Complaints and Grievances
- 7.05V Information Communication Technology