

Social Media Policy

We recognise both the benefits, and challenges, of using Facebook and social media in the early childhood setting. This policy has been developed to provide employees, families, volunteers and students with standards of use as they engage in 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

RELATED POLICIES

Child Safe Environment Policy Code of Conduct Policy Dealing with Complaints Policy (Family) Family Communication Policy Health and Safety Policy Interactions with Children	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Student and Volunteer Workers Policy Supervision Policy Work Health and Safety Policy
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PURPOSE

Being part of our Services entails a position of trust and responsibility. We aim to ensure that our Service, children, educators, and/or families are not compromised in any form on Facebook or any other social media platform and that all social media usage complies with REED's philosophy, relevant policies, and the code of conduct. REED is committed to protecting children's right to privacy and their right to be treated with respect, this policy clarifies the usage of social media for services.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of REED Services.

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 within Service operations. 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 REED Services remain open and welcoming for children, families, and staff.

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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, and LinkedIn.
- Image sharing sites e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, and Imgur.
- Video hosting sites e.g. YouTube and Vimeo.
- Community blogs e.g. Tumblr and Medium.
- Discussion sites e.g. Reddit and Quora.

Service Facebook Account

REED services may have a Facebook page for the purposes of marketing and community engagement.

REED services will ensure

- No photos of children will be displayed on any service Facebook page
- Upcoming service events are not to be posted on service Facebook pages
- Events are shared after the event has finished but will not display photos of children attending the event

REED services may

- Advertise local community events on their service Facebook page
- Advertise local open positions at their service on their local Facebook page

NOTE: The Service Facebook account must not be used for personal comments or discussions.

PRIVACY

- All staff and educators must remain aware that they represent and could be identified as an employee of REED through any online activity.
- Staff and Educators must maintain appropriate privacy of families, employees, students, children and volunteers, including when they have obtained permission to publish content to the Service Facebook account.
- Absolutely no written content will be published to Facebook without the implicit and written permission of families to whom the content relates.
- Passwords will not be shared without authorisation from management.

REED will remain up to date with any changes to Facebook ensuring privacy setting remain up to date.

Regarding the REED Service Facebook page the Nominated Supervisor or Team Leader will:

- Ensure personal information about families, children and staff is not posted on-line.
- Ensure the highest level of privacy settings are established and maintained on the account.
- Ensure all passwords are kept confidential.
- Log out of Facebook when not in use and prior to leaving the Service.
- Regularly scan online content related to the Service to ensure appropriateness.
- Adhere to REED's *Dealing with Complaints Policy* and Procedures to investigate any occurrences where a person working at the Service may:
 - Defame, harass or bully any other person who works at REED or is connected to REED.
- Ensure that any staff or educator found guilty of any social media misconduct (on both the Service Facebook page and any private page) is aware that this may result in termination of employment.

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 REED 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 a REED Service as a 'friend' on Facebook or any other social media. REED does not recommend that staff add families of our Services to personal social media accounts as they will still be seen as a representative of REED and required to uphold REED'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 REED's 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 REED does not recommend staff have families as friends on their private account.

If adding families to personal social media accounts, Educators will adhere to relevant policies, including REED's Code of Conduct.

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 REED,
- Damages or harms REED'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 REED's Code of Conduct Policy. This may lead to termination of their position.

Continuous Quality Improvement

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

Educators and staff will complete online training through the eSafety Commissioner to ensure staff remain up to date with current research and are aware of how to report inappropriate content on social media sites.

Resources

Australian Government Office of the eSafety commission 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-foreducators/checklist>

Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/> Early
Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/esafety-early-years-program-for-educators). (2012). eSafety Commissioner:
<https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/esafety-early-years-program-for-educators> Guide to the Education
and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017). (Amended 2020).
Privacy Act 1988.
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
February 2024	Removal of references to sharing photos of children Addition of what can be shared on service Facebook pages	February 2025

November 2022	No changes	November 2023
November 2021	Related policies updated, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations added, minor editing	November 2022
February 2020	Policy developed by REED management	February 2021