

Safe & Responsible Use of Digital Devices Policy

1. Purpose

Y Whittlesea is committed to the safe, respectful and responsible use of digital devices to protect children's safety, privacy, and dignity while supporting their learning, wellbeing, and inclusion.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, students, and visitors in Y Whittlesea early learning centres, kindergartens, holiday programs, and children's services.

3. Policy Statement

We recognise digital devices can enhance learning, documentation, and family engagement when used safely and intentionally, but must never compromise child safety, privacy, or relationships.

4. Key Principles

4.1 Personal Devices

- Personal mobile phones and smart watches or glasses are not permitted in rooms or program areas.
- Must be stored away in staff lockers, offices, or as directed during work hours.
- Personal device use is only permitted on breaks in designated staff areas.

4.2 Approved Service Devices

- Only Y-approved devices (e.g. iPads, interactive whiteboards) are used with children.
- Approved devices are labelled with Safe Device stickers to teach children that these are safe.
- Educators must explain their use to children to maintain transparency and trust.

4.3 Supervision and Privacy

- Devices must never be used in bathrooms, toilets, nappy change areas, or when children are undressed.
- Using devices must not reduce active supervision or meaningful engagement with children.

4.4 Photos and Videos

- Photos/videos of children can only be taken on approved service devices, with:
 - Documented parent/guardian consent
 - Clear purpose for educational documentation or communication
 - Additional specific consent for sharing externally (e.g. newsletters, websites, social media)
- Images must be stored securely, not transferred to personal devices, and deleted in line with service record-keeping requirements.

4.5 Child Safety Online

- Staff must model safe, respectful digital use.
- Children's digital interactions (e.g. using educational apps, taking photos) will be supervised actively.
- Educators will teach children age-appropriate digital safety, including understanding permission and respectful image sharing.

4.6 Professionalism and Confidentiality

- Staff must never discuss or share images of children or families on personal devices, personal social media, or outside the service.
- Any breaches are treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action.
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5. Responsibilities

Approved Provider

- Ensure this policy aligns with legislative requirements and child safety standards
- Provide appropriate digital infrastructure, secure storage systems, and approved service devices
- Allocate resources for staff training on digital safety, privacy, and responsible use
- Support a culture of digital responsibility through clear leadership and consistent messaging
- Respond appropriately to any breaches, including investigations and reporting where required

Nominated Supervisors

- Communicate this policy to all staff, students, volunteers, and visitors upon induction
- Monitor compliance and reinforce safe digital practices across the service
- Ensure personal devices are stored securely and used only in designated areas
- Ensure all photos/videos are taken and stored according to consent, documentation, and security protocols
- Provide ongoing professional development around digital safety and child protection
- Review and approve any digital communications shared with families or the community
- Act immediately on any breaches of this policy

Educators and Staff

- Comply with this policy at all times, including correct storage and use of personal devices
- Use only approved Y devices for educational and communication purposes
- Ensure device use never compromises active supervision or engagement with children
- Only take photos or videos of children when:
 - Parent/guardian consent is documented
 - The purpose aligns with educational documentation or communication
 - No personal devices are used under any circumstances
- Actively supervise children's use of digital devices and teach age-appropriate digital safety concepts
- Report any suspected misuse or breaches to their supervisor immediately
- Maintain professionalism, privacy, and confidentiality at all times

Students and Volunteers

- Follow directions from educators and supervisors regarding digital device use
- Never use personal phones, smart watches, or other devices during programs
- Only use service-approved devices when permitted and under supervision
- Respect child privacy and never take or share photos or personal information

Families

- Provide written consent for any use of photos or videos of their child, including for external use (e.g. newsletters, social media)
- Understand and support the service's mobile phone and digital use expectations, including not taking unauthorised photos or videos on site
- Communicate any concerns about digital privacy or safety with the Nominated Supervisor

6. Related Policies and Documents

- [ACECQA's child-safe technology guidance \(2024\)](#)
- [eSafety Early Years resources](#)
- Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Information Technology Policy
- Social Media Policy

7. Legislative and Industry Requirements: [Link](#) to Legislative Compliance Register

8. Consequences of breaching this policy: All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).

9. Policy owner: The GM Early Years is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required, and regular reviews as scheduled.

10. Document Control: Review of this policy will be undertaken every two years, or prior as required by law, in consultation with appropriate Y People.

Version:	Description of Amendment	Amended by	Date	Release Date
3.0				
2.0	Updated	Rebecca Davis	4/7/25	July 2025
1.0	Creation	Fiona Miller	10/8/22	10/1/23

