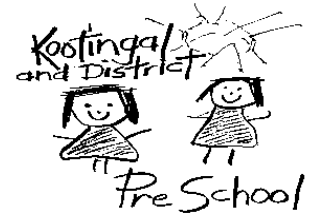


Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Social Media



Introduction

We recognise both the benefits, and challenges, of using Facebook and other social media platforms 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.

Goals – What are we going to do?

Kootingal and District Preschool’s website and social media sites are maintained to inform families about the activities and the services provided by the organisation. The Education and Care service respects the privacy of educators, children and families. The service seeks to keep all records private and confidential and maintains records according to the *National Privacy Principles* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*. The Education and Care service develops guidelines with educators in regard to social media participation connected with their work as Early Childhood educators.

Being part of our service 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 our service’s philosophy, relevant policies, and the code of conduct.

Strategies – To achieve our goals

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 our Service 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 Account

Our service has a Facebook account to converse and share information with our families and community, which is administered by the Approved Provider, Nominated supervisor and the second in charge. Our facebook page is a closed account where families will be added while their children are enrolled at Kootingal and district preschool and will be removed by administration when their child no longer attends the service.

The intent for our service Facebook page is to:

- keep families in touch with what's happening at the Service, including upcoming and special events.
- connect with other parents and share thoughts about programs, policies, and procedures
- provide an avenue to ask parents their thoughts and provide appropriate research-based information on common child rearing issues.
- provide educational information to families and employees.

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

Social Media Guidelines

These guidelines are not to discourage or unduly limit employees use of social media for personal expression or other online activities in their personal life.

Employees should be aware of and understand the potential risks and damage to Kootingal & District Preschool that can occur, either directly or indirectly from their personal use of social media and should comply with these guidelines to ensure that the risk is minimised.

Employees are personally responsible for content published in their personal capacity on any form of social media. When in doubt, employees can seek guidance from Committee or the Nominated Supervisor on how to comply with the following obligations. To avoid breaching these guidelines employees must:

- Only disclose and discuss publicly available information
- Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant policies and other government requirements
- Expressly state that views are personal and not representative of Kootingal & District Preschool
- Behave politely and respectfully
- Adhere to the terms of use for using the social media platform or website, and adhere to legislation including copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment, any other applicable laws, and the departments Privacy policy

Employees must not:

- Post material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful
- Imply that they are authorised to speak as a representative of Kootingal & District Preschool nor give the impression that the views expressed are those of Kootingal & District Preschool
- Use the identity or likeness of another employee, contractor, or other member of the preschool
- Use any of Kootingal & District Preschool's email addresses, logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of their personal comment
- Use or disclose any confidential information or personal information obtained in their capacity as an employee or contractor of Kootingal & District Preschool

- Post material that is, or might be construed as threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards another employee or contractor of Kootingal & District Preschool
- Comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to Kootingal & District Preschool's reputation or bring it into disrepute

When accessing social media via the internet, employees must do so 'reasonably' and in a manner that does not interfere with work and is not inappropriate or excessively accessed. It is not acceptable to spend time using social media that is not related to your work unless it occurs in your own time (eg. during breaks).

The following is offered as general guidance to assist employees in complying with the obligations set out in the guidelines. Then in doubt, employees should seek further guidance.

Personal Social Media Accounts

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 our 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.

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 a reprimand as per our *Code of Conduct for Staff Members* policy. This may lead to disciplinary procedures or termination of their position.

Privacy, confidentiality, and information security

- Employees should only use personal information obtained in the course of your employment or engagement with Kootingal & District Preschool in a manner consistent with the services Privacy and Confidentiality policy
- Users should not publish or report on conversations or information that is deemed confidential, classified or deals with matters that are internal in nature
- Children, families and staff's personal information should not be made available on social media unless express consent has been obtained from the child's parent/carer in relation to the use and disclosure of their personal information

Copyright

- Employees must respect copyright laws and fair use of copyright material
- All employees are expected to attribute work to the original author or source wherever possible

Harassment and bullying

- All Kootingal & District Preschool’s policies and guidelines apply both to online and in the physical workplace
- Workplace bullying and harassment includes any bullying or harassing comments employees make online, even on their own private social media networks or out of office hours
- Abusive, harassing, threatening or defaming postings may result in disciplinary action being taken
- All employees are expected to treat their colleagues with respect and dignity and must ensure their behaviour does not constitute bullying and/or harassment

Defamation

Employees are to refrain from publishing material that may cause injury to another person, organisation, association or company’s reputation, and should seek further legal guidance of publication of such material is thought to be necessary. If an Employee becomes aware of any conversation taking place on social media in regards to Kootingal and District preschool and the tone of the conversation appears critical of the organization or of an individual staff member, then it is to be reported to the nominated supervisor or committee for investigation.

Offensive or obscene material

Material may be offensive or obscene and may infringe relevant online classification laws if it is pornographic, sexually suggestive, harassing, hateful, racist, sexist, abusive or discriminatory.

Contempt of court

- All employees must exercise care if referring to pending court proceedings to avoid publishing material that may have a tendency to prejudice those proceedings, in particular, material that will not be part of the evidence in those proceedings
- It is recommended that all employees make enquiries as to any applicable court suppression orders prior to commenting on any court proceedings (whether past or pending)

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that no confidential information can be gained from the education and care service’s website or social media sites. Individuals and services are not obliged to give personal information through the website and social media sites. However, if an individual chooses to provide information to service via email, that information will remain confidential. ➤ Ensure that information gained via email can only be used by administration staff or management to contact a person, offer or send information about the service and to request feedback on the website or the education and care service. ➤ Ensure that information gained about users from the website will only be used for statistical research for the education and care service to ascertain future development of the website. This information will not be available to any other organisations ➤ Encourage families and educators to give feedback on the website and how it can be improved to meet the needs of the community.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Not disclose or publish any information related to educators, children or families without written consent from that individual or their family. ➤ Develop guidelines for educators regarding their participation with families currently connected with the education and care service on social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram.
Early Childhood Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Follow guidelines for educators regarding their participation with families currently connected with the education and care service on social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Privacy online, Social Media policy regularly. Updated information will be incorporated as needed.

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this policy every 12 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with Regulation 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

The education and care service's website and social media platforms are an information resource available to prospective families as well as current families and educators and abides by current legislation. The privacy and protection of children, families and educators is not compromised by participation on social media sites.

Links to other policies:

Child Protection

Child Safe Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct for Staff Members

Enrolment and Orientation

Complaints and Feedback

Workplace Health and Safety

Privacy and Confidentiality

Interactions with Children

Supervision

Participation of Volunteers and Students

Related Legislation:

NQS

Quality Area 2	Children's health and safety
Quality Area 4	Staffing arrangements
Quality Area 6	Collaborative partnerships with partnerships with families and communities
Quality Area 7	Governance and leadership

National Regulations

Reg	84	Awareness of child protection law
Reg	177	Prescribes enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider
Reg	181	Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider
Reg	183	Storage of records and other documents

Sources:

- Privacy Act 1988 - www.privacy.gov.au/law/act
- Privacy Amendment Private Sector Act 2000
- National Privacy Principles - www.privacy.gov.au/materials/types/infosheets/view/6583
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- ECA - Code of Ethics
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner – www.privacy.gov.au
- Australian Legal Information Institute - www.austlii.edu.au
- Early Childhood Australia - www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Guide to developing a Social Media Policy - www.inc.com/guides/2010/05/writing-a-social-media-policy.html

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