

Social Media Policy and Procedures

Policy Number	2000/44
Approved by	HECC Management Committee –10/05/2016; Director - March 2021
Last reviewed	April 2016; June 2019; February 2021
Next review due	2024
National Law and Regulations	National Regulation 168(h)(i)
National Quality Standard	Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities. Additional Links: QA 2, 4, 7

Policy Aim

The Heritage Early Childhood Centre (HECC) Social Media Policy and Procedures aims to:

- Provide guidelines for the use of social media by members of the HECC community.
- Ensure that the use of social media by members of the HECC community does not adversely affect the safety, health or wellbeing of the children, educators, families or visitors to the service.
- Ensure the privacy, confidentiality, interests, dignity and rights of the HECC service, children, employees, families and all supporting agencies are maintained at all times.
- Establish a culture of transparency, trust and integrity in social media activities at HECC.

Scope

This policy applies to the Management Committee, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisors, Educational Leader, educators, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and all others attending HECC programs and activities.

Policy Statement

Social media are defined as online services and tools used for publishing, sharing and discussing information and are distinct from industrial media, such as newspapers, films and television. The list of social media types is extensive with new and innovative social media sites being developed almost every day. Examples include:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, YouTube)
- Blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs
- Micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter)
- Wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool)
- Vod and podcasting
- Online multiplayer gaming platforms (e.g. World of War Craft, Second life)
- Instant messaging (including SMS)
- Geo-spatial tagging (Foursquare)

HECC recognises that Facebook has become particularly popular with over 800 million active users worldwide and many HECC educators and parents/guardians have a personal Facebook page. In addition, utilising a Facebook Page or Group or Twitter micro-blog has been identified by early childhood education and care settings as offering potential advantages by allowing services and educators to connect with many different related organisations and people, enabling them to stay up to date with current information and to network with colleagues.

HECC understands there are also potential disadvantages and risks when using social media in the early childhood education setting which need to be well managed. This policy has been developed to ensure carefully considered guidelines are in place for social media use by the HECC community.

In today's increasingly on-line connected world, HECC recognises that social media will play an increasingly important role supporting communication with families, educators and the local community. HECC believes it is important to have a multi-layered approach to its' communication strategy with conversations, newsletters, notices, websites, email and text messaging continuing to play a major role. **Refer to:** Communication and Family Involvement Policy.

Rationale

The HECC Social Media Policy has been developed to comply with:

- The *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*
- The *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (ACT)*.
- The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (ACT)*.
- The *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care, 2012*. **Refer to:** Appendix 1.
- National Privacy Principles: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles>
- HECC Code of Conduct/Ethics
- HECC Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Strategies and Practices

HECC website

- HECC operates a website which is maintained and updated by senior administrative staff. Guidelines are in place to ensure names or recognisable photographs of staff, children, visitors or family members are not posted on the website without written permission. **Refer to:** Communication and Family Involvement Policy; Enrolment and Graduation Rooms Policy.

General Guidelines for Social Media Use

- HECC management will foster a culture of openness and listen to and respect the opinions of staff, families and educators in relation to social media usage.
- HECC management will include social media and discuss the policy as an agenda item at staff meetings to support staff and educators to understand appropriate use. This includes discussing as a team the legal and ethical responsibility to children, families, community and colleagues.
- Members of the HECC community including staff, educators and families must abide by the HECC social media guidelines and protect the privacy, confidentiality and the interests of the service, employees, children, families and other supporting agencies at all times.
- Members of the HECC community are not permitted to upload, post, forward or post links on social media relating to other members of the HECC community that:
 - Are abusive, obscene, bullying, harassing, defaming or give offence.
 - Contain personal and/or cultural attacks or insults.
 - Are potentially libelous or defamatory or have the potential to bring the service or the early childhood education sector into disrepute.

HECC educators must:

- Not use location-based apps while working with enrolled children or post details on any social media regarding excursions or upcoming social outings.
- Only use the HECC camera to take photographs or video at the service or during excursions and ensure these images are used only for the purpose of completing the Day Book or evaluations. They must never be shared through personal social media sites.
- Inform the Director or Management Committee if they notice any form of bullying or breaches of this policy on social media sites.

- Not post or like any sites that promote racism, religious intolerance, hatred etc. or that may be deemed as inappropriate in the role of working with children.
- Not post or comment on any social media sites in a way that may breach the terms of this policy or their employment.
- During work hours, use social media platforms for work purposes only.
- Ensure that SMS is only used for work purposes if it is the best option at the time.
- Never disclose or discuss on social media personal or confidential information related to the HECC service, families, staff, children or community.
- Report to the Director or Management Committee if they witness content posted on social media about any aspects of the services (whether complementary or critical).
- Understand that serious breaches or the misuse of information of social media can, in some circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or can escalate to legal liability against persons or the service. **Refer to:** Non-compliance section.

HECC educators are encouraged:

- Not to friend parents/guardians of enrolled children on Facebook as it can make it difficult to maintain their professional role. (Educators may use their individual discretion and exceptions may include if educators are close friends with an enrolled child's parents outside of HECC or become Facebook friends once the child is no longer in their care).
- To set their own Facebook profiles to 'private' to help prevent any accidental breaches of this policy.

Families and visitors

- May use a personal camera or mobile phone to take photographs at the service or during excursions of their own child. If other HECC children are captured in the photo, they must not post the photo to a social media site without the permission of a parent/guardian of those child/ren.
- May not post information about the service, staff, management, families or any matters relating to the service on a social media site.

Children

- May not have access to social media sites while at the HECC service.

Facebook Page/Group and Twitter Blog

While HECC does not yet have its' own Facebook social media page or group or Twitter blog, it is understood that many education and care services utilise these services as their preferred social media communication tools (For example: University Preschool and Childcare: <https://www.facebook.com/University-Preschool-Child-Care-Centre-722462384475902/>)

HECC has developed the following guidelines to ensure there is a framework of governance in place prior to considering developing a social media page, group or blog in the future. **Refer to:** Appendix 2: How to Create a Facebook Page/Group and Twitter account.

HECC management will:

- Approach the use of a Facebook Page or Group, or Twitter Blog with caution, by carefully and thoroughly researching and managing its usage.
- Protect the service, families' and children's privacy with appropriate settings.
- Plan ahead and think about whom, what and how the service may utilise a Facebook page or group or Twitter blog to reach the HECC community. This may include to:
 - Display photographs of children's play environments and words to demonstrate learning through play (Note: no photos of children without parental permission. University Preschool pixelates faces).
 - Communicate suggestions to families about resources and activities to use at home or to bring to the service, eg, recycled materials.
 - Provide links to relevant community resources and organisations.
 - Seek family feedback.
 - Promote upcoming service or related community events.



- General service notices and reminders.
- Reaffirm details provided through other communication sources such as service newsletters, notices and flyers.
- Celebrate achievements.
- Nominate dedicated administrators for the page, group or blog to ensure correct and responsible use. These administrators will include the Director as well as additional nominated staff members.
- Ensure any Facebook group is set up as a 'Closed Group' so the group's posts & content are private and restricted to 'members' of the group only.
 - Members of the HECC community will be invited (by email/Parent Handbook/newsletter) to log onto Facebook and search for the 'Group' and then submit a request to join.
 - Requests to join the 'Group' will be monitored and actioned by senior administrators on an ongoing basis.
- Ensure, when posting content and images, the page, group or blog administrators will not:
 - 'Tag' any image or content shared with parents of children who may also be on Facebook.
 - Use a child's full name if they appear in a shared image.
- Clearly define for senior administrative staff and educators what information is appropriate and inappropriate to share on a page, group or blog. For example;
 - No grievances, absences, family matters of concern or medications can be discussed.
 - No private emails, private phone numbers, private mobiles and private addresses may be shared on Facebook. **Refer to:** www.facebook.com/fbprivacy
- Ensure administrators understand how to navigate and use the site to gain its full potential.
- Ensure administrators respond to comments in a timely fashion, eg, Facebook is current and people expect a reply within 24 hours.
- Be clear on service responses to comments and check with the Director prior to publishing.
- Ensure information is kept confidential and there is a high level of administrative care.
 - Facebook settings can be defined so as only the site administrator receives postings thus any information posted is not made public unless the administrator approves it. This allows for honest feedback without the risk of inappropriate comments being made public.

Visitors interacting with the page, group or blog will be expected to:

- Clearly identify themselves if they have a Facebook account by their real name when either 'liking' or commenting on posts and/or updates.
- Respect others' rights to privacy by not uploading any footage or photographs taken of other children in the HECC community and only including their own children.
- Not use the page, group or blog for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures, personal campaigns or to promote other businesses; however the page may be used to thank local businesses for their support of the HECC service.

Educators will ensure:

- Whenever they are permitted to post on a HECC Page, Group or Blog, they will do so in accordance with this policy.
- Transparency and authenticity in their comments.
- Relationships are respectful and professional at all times.
- If they write in the first person, they will identify themselves and consider using the following disclaimer "the views expressed are my own and don't reflect the views of my employer".
- They do not write about other services or organisations.
- They share information that is current, interesting and accurate.
- They let families know their feedback is appreciated.
- They provide links to appropriate organisations that are relevant to education and care.

Communication

HECC management will convey the Social Media Policy:

- During the family and staff orientation processes.
- Through the Heritage Handbook, Educator Handbook and Policy Handbook.
- Through the newsletter.

Non-Compliance with HECC Social Media Policy

- Any breaches of this policy will result in an inquiry, which may lead to termination of employment in the case of staff, or termination of a child's placement at the service in the case of breaches by families or children. Where necessary, information will be forwarded to the Police for further investigations and action. **Refer to:** Staff Misconduct Policy, Non-Compliance Policy; General Grievance Policy; Staff Grievance Policy.
- Any members of the HECC community who feel that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by another member of the HECC community on social media are asked to follow the General Grievances Policy or Staff Grievance Policy. This involves bringing it to the attention of the Nominated Supervisor or Heritage Committee immediately either via email, telephone or conversation in person and not by publicly addressing the issue on a social media site.

Policy Review

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, HECC Management and the Policy Officer 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.
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research and best practice.
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required.
- Encourage families and educators to contribute to the regular review of this policy.
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

Related Policies

Name	Location
Communication and Family Involvement Policy	
Heritage Code of Conduct/Ethics	Heritage Policy Manuals in
Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy	Main Office, Entrance Foyer
Enrolment and Graduating Rooms Policy	and Staff Programming
Complaints and Grievance Management Policy (and non-Staff)	Room/Library
Non-compliance Policy	Policies and Procedures Section
Staff Complaints and Grievance Management Policy	on Heritage website.
Staff Underperformance and Misconduct Policy	
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	Heritage Handbook; Educator Handbook; Policy Handbook

References and Further Reading

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). (2018). *Guide to the National Quality Framework.*

https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-03/Guide-to-the-NQF_0.pdf

Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (2009)

<http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011 (ACT). *Effective: 1 January 2018.*

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-42/current/pdf/2011-42.pdf>

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (ACT). *Current Version 1 Feb 2018.*

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (ACT). *WHS ACT 2011.*

<https://legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-35/>

Other References

Kids Matter. (2014). *Using Social Media in Your Service.*

Lynda.com. (2011). *Creating a Facebook Page for your organization.*

Mudgee Preschool. (2014). *Social Media Policy*

NSW Family Day Care Association Resource Sheet. (2012). *Facebook in Family Daycare:*

RuralCONNECT Project Update, Issue 6. (2013). *Using Social Media in your Service*

South Australia Department for Education and Child Development. (2015). *Social Media Guidelines.*

ACECQA Links

ACECQA Social Media Policy. (2021). <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/help/social-media-policy>

Engaging with Families: Social and Smart Online

[https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/EngagingWithFamilies%E2%80%93SocialMedia-SmartOnline.PDF)

[12/EngagingWithFamilies%E2%80%93SocialMedia-SmartOnline.PDF](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/EngagingWithFamilies-SocialMedia-Policies.pdf)

Engaging with Families: Social Media Policies

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/EngagingWithFamilies-SocialMedia-Policies.pdf>

Useful websites

Cyber-safety: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

Early Childhood Services on Facebook and Twitter

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority

www.facebook.com/acecqa

<https://twitter.com/ACECQA>

@ACECQA

Raising Children Network

www.facebook.com/Raisingchildrennetwork

https://twitter.com/RCN_AUS?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

@RCN_AUS

University Preschool and Child Care

<https://www.facebook.com/University-Preschool-Child-Care-Centre-722462384475902/>

https://twitter.com/upccc?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw

@upccc

Version Control and Change History

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Authors and Amendments
1	10 May 2016	HECC Management Committee	Author: Julia Charters. New Policy.
2	June 2019	Director	Minor edits to wording to make clearer. No changes to policy or procedures.
3	March 2021	Director	All links and references updated. No changes to policy or procedures

Appendix 1 National Regulations and Quality Standards

National Regulation 168 Policies and Procedures

- (2) Policies and procedures are required in relation to the following—
- (h) providing a child safe environment;
 - (i) staffing, including—
 - (i) a code of conduct for staff members;
 - (l) governance and management of the service, including confidentiality of records

National Quality Standard

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

Standard 6.1: Respectful supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained.

- 6.1.3 Current information about the service is available to families.
- 6.2.2 Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parents and families.
- 6.3.1 Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained.
- 6.3.4 The service builds relationships and engages with their local community.

Additional Quality Area Links

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety.

Standard 2.3 Each child is protected.

Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangement.

Standard 4.2 Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are respectful and ethical.

Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management

Standard 7.1: Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.

- 7.1.1 Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service.
- 7.1.2 The induction of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is comprehensive.

Standard 7.2 There is a commitment to continuous improvement.

7.2.1 A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the service's operations.

7.2.3 An effective self-assessment and quality improvement process is in place.

Standard 7.3 Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service.

7.3.1 Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.

7.3.5 Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Appendix 2

How to Create a Facebook Page

A Facebook page for an organisation can be created from a personal profile (www.facebook.com/pages/create.php). It can also be done without a personal profile but requires the user to register in order to administer the pages. Once created, it is then possible to invite people to 'Like' the page and start sharing. See also www.facebook.com/help

Once the type of organisation has been chosen, additional information will be requested. It is necessary to follow the prompts to complete the required information. Once set up it will take the user to the page where it can be updated like a regular Facebook profile by adding photos, posting status updates, and commenting or posting on other people's Walls.

Note: To ensure comments on other walls appear as being posted by HECC and not a personal account, it is necessary to go to the **Account** menu in the upper-right hand corner of the website, and choose **Use Facebook as Page** to select which identity to use when interacting with other pages and profiles.

Useful options

Click Edit under Page name and:

- Select Apps from the left-hand column, and choose to add apps like Events, Photos, Video, and Discussion Boards, which make it easy to add multimedia and interactivity to the page.
- Go to Manage Admins to give other Facebook users Admin privileges, giving due regard to privacy as administrators have control over the Page.
- Click Insights to see data and graphs detailing how many people have Liked the Page and how many users are actively using the Page each month.
- Explore the other categories in the left sidebar to see what additional options are available.

How to Create a Facebook Group

While Facebook Pages were designed to be the official profiles for entities, such as celebrities, brands or businesses, Facebook Groups are the place for small group communication and for people to share their common interests and express their opinion. Groups allow people to come together around a common cause, issue or activity to organize, express objectives, discuss issues, post photos and share related content.

- From a home page, go to the Groups section on the left side menu and click Create Group.
- Click + Create New Group at the top of the page. A window will appear, where it is possible to add a group name, add members and select the privacy settings for the group.
- Click Create when done.

How to Create a Twitter Account

Go to the <http://twitter.com> homepage and locate the sign-up box, which will lead directly to the signup page. Enter the name, email address and preferred password, then click 'Sign Up'. NB: Only one email address can be attached to one Twitter account. A new page will appear asking for a username to be selected.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Twitter-Account>