

Social Media and Digital Technology Policy

Purpose

This policy relates to Peak staff, families and children accessing and using the internet, social networking platforms and applications on any device such as desktop computers, mobile phones and tablets.

At Peak we value the role that Digital Technology has in enhancing our daily learning program. We also value the use of Social Media to communicate with parents and the community about our service. We believe children’s learning experiences can be extended by using digital technology such as laptops, mobile phones and computers to complement our other activities. Children may be assisted to research on the internet, use audio and visual programs and apps and to take photos and videos of their learning.

We recognise the importance of keeping children safe while using digital technology and safeguarding their right to privacy. We will ensure that our service, children, educators and families are not compromised on any form of social networking or digital platforms but that social media and digital technology is used to enhance our service and provide opportunities to the children to assist in their learning, development and entertainment.

Considerations

Education and Care Services National Regulations	National Quality Standard/s	Other Service policies/documentation	Other
Law: Section 168 Regulations: 181, 183, 184 Child safe Standards	Standards 4.2, 6.2 Elements 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 6.2.3	- Use of Photographic and Video Images of Children Policy - Student device agreement - Staff and family codes of conduct (pending) - Communication with Families, Confidentiality, Governance and Management, Staffing Policies.	- NSW Department of Education BYOD policy and student Guidelines - My Time Our Place - Parent Handbook - Staff Handbook

Procedures

Children’s use of devices:

- Peak encourages active play, sports and social interaction above all. For this reason, we discourage the use of technology devices unless it is for homework or learning purposes. Peak staff will provide opportunities for children to use computers, tablets and the centre phone under close supervision during programmed activities.
- For some children with additional needs, the use of devices for screen time is an appropriate strategy. In consultation with the child’s family, individual children may be given time on the centre or their own device. This should not exceed 30 minutes in total each day.

- All devices accessible to the children will have parental controls enabled to safeguard the children from exposure to inappropriate internet content.
- Should a child be inadvertently exposed to inappropriate content, centre staff will respond promptly and the child's family will be informed.
- Some schools provide homework in a digital form. In centres where this is the case, children may use their own devices, school devices and centre devices at scheduled homework time only, and under close educator supervision.
- Children who bring their own device to Peak will be required to complete a device agreement with staff. Parents will be asked to provide permission for their child to use their device at Peak and to reinforce the terms of this agreement.
- While Peak cannot be held accountable for damage or theft of devices that are brought into the service environment, every effort will be made to ensure that any valuables are held in a secure location. A student should let an Educator know where they have a valuable item during any before or after school care session and each centre should individually review the most secure location to hold any devices. This location is to be clearly communicated to all Educators in the site induction.
- Children will not be permitted to use their own mobile phone devices in the service. These are to remain in the child's school bag at all times.
- Children are asked to communicate with their parents, when necessary, by requesting that centre staff use the Peak phone to call or text on their behalf. This is at the discretion of the supervisor and parents.

Use of children's images:

- Please refer to Peak's **Use of Photographic and Video Images of Children Policy** for further guidance on use of children's images.
- Families will be requested on enrolment to indicate, through a privacy agreement, permission for their child's image to be used internally by the service and/or externally for advertising and social media use. If a parent has not indicated agreement the service will act as if they do not wish images of their child to be used by the service.
- When a family has given permission for their child's image to be used by the service, the child shall have the final say as to whether they wish any particular image to be used. Children can also decide they do not wish any image to be used, even if permission has already been given by a parent. In all instances the child's permission shall be sought prior to the use of any image and they shall be informed it is perfectly reasonable to say 'No'.

Staff use of devices and social networking:

- Staff are required to leave their mobile phones in the staff room during shifts to minimise distractions. However, exceptions may apply for emergency communication or exceptional circumstances, as advised by centre supervisors.
- When an educator is required to carry their phone during a shift, it is strictly for communication within the centre, and personal use is prohibited during work hours.
- Staff must not access social networking sites on their mobile phones during shifts. The use of camera or video functions on phones to take photos is strictly prohibited unless specific permission has been granted by a supervisor for educational purposes, such as Story Park observations. Once photos are uploaded, staff must immediately delete them from their personal devices.
- No personal social networking posts related to events or children at the service are allowed. Sharing any service-related information or photos of children on personal social media accounts is strictly forbidden.
- If such an incident occurs, families will be notified, and the staff member must immediately remove the content. If necessary, the platform will be contacted for removal. Violations may lead to an inquiry and potential termination of employment.
- Social networking sites are not private, and staff must refrain from sharing private or confidential information about service families or colleagues. Any breach of privacy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- Harassment of any kind on social media, whether sexual, verbal, or otherwise, will not be tolerated. Staff involved in such incidents will be subject to inquiry and potential termination depending on the severity.
- Should a family member engage in harassment towards a staff member via social media, management will investigate, and depending on the outcome, the family may face termination of their child's placement at the service.
- This policy is aligned with state and national laws on social media usage. Any illegal activities conducted by staff on social media platforms, including but not limited to defamation, will result in legal action and police involvement if necessary.
- Any use of devices by students on placement or volunteers requires prior approval from the service. Use of children's images for assessment purposes must be pre-approved by the child's guardian.

Peak's Facebook & Instagram site

- Only an authorised staff member or member of management can add or amend information on the Peak Sports and Learning's Facebook site without seeking prior approval. The authorised staff member or management person can also provide permission to other staff to add or amend information on the service's social media sites where necessary.

Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Next Review	Approved by	Amendment
1	October 2019	October 2020	Directors	Created using consultation with staff and families
2	March 2020	February 2022	Directors	Moved to new document review timeline.
3	February 2022	February 2024	Directors	Updated in line with addition of Instagram as business tool
4	March 2023	February 2024	Directors	Secure storage of valuables added in children's use of devices.
5	February 2024	February 2025	Directors	Small amendment to Staff Use of Personal Mobile Phones.