

Technology & Social Media Policy-Staff



Digital technologies and computers have become an integral part of many children's daily lives. For this reason, it is important that our Educators are not only familiar with the use of computer technologies, but are able to guide children's understanding of, and ability to use them. Technology and Media items will only be used as an extension to the daily program assisting in development of social, physical, emotional, cognitive, language and creative potential of each child. Quality TV programs can be helpful in the retelling of stories about our culture and help to celebrate diversity.

The advances taking place in information technology have led to a growing range of devices that assist communication and integrate existing technology. The use of such devices to transmit and receive information is now accepted as an essential business practice which has significantly influenced, and will continue to influence, communication and working methods now and into the future. This policy takes into account these future developments and is to be used in conjunction with the schools Social Media and Cyber Safety Policy & Procedure for more information and details.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE		
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
727	Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider
181-184	Confidentiality and storage of records

RATIONALE

This policy relates to all computer use and access to workstations, laptops and other supplied electronic devices at The Farmhouse Montessori School. The policy is intended to support the use of computers by staff in their work, and to protect both individual members of staff and their work, and the Farmhouse Montessori School, its systems and its resources.

IMPLEMENT

The Farmhouse Montessori School will implement responsible behaviour and limit screen time when using technology, respecting the School, children and the privacy of families and Educators. Educators will exercise appropriate judgement and behave in a professional and ethical manner when using technology.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the School.

AIM

The Internet is a magnificent resource for research, communication and extending programming ideas and interests. Computer/tablets used within our School aim to encourage children to solve problems and use logical reasoning, leading children to make decisions and choices and assisting them to use computer software competently.

Management/Nominated Supervisor/ Certified Supervisor will:

- Identify technology training needs of Educators in professional development

- Ensure the School's privacy and confidentiality policy is adhered to at all times by Educators
- Ensure there is no unauthorised access to the Farmhouse Montessori School's technology facilities (programs, software program etc.)
- Ensure all Educators have appropriate log on details to provide secure location
- Ensure all technological devices have current virus protection software installed
- Develop guidelines about how technology will be used within our Service.

Educators will:

- Not communicate with any past or present students in any forms of online media or social networks
- Comply with current legislation and School policies
- Keep passwords confidential
- Log out of computers and software programs after each use
- Secure all computers and tablets at the end of the school day under your direct control in your room/area.
- Only access and modify files and data which they have authorisation to access
- Not harass, slander, intimidate, embarrass, defame or seek to offend another person, group of people or organisation via technological devices
- Not make copies of, transmit, copy or steal School documents
- Not use personal mobile devices to take photos or breach children and families' privacy
- Support children's natural curiosity for technology within the School
- Provide children with access to technology to help develop their computer literacy skills
- Build on children's learning and inspire the ongoing and enthusiastic acquisition of knowledge through technology
- Use technology to build on current projects and document children's learning.
- Limit the amount of time spent on screens to 20 minutes per day.
- Endeavour to limit experiences involving screen use to those which have an educational component including movement.
- Discuss with children the role of screen time in their lives and support them in making healthy choices about their use of screen time for both education and recreation.
- Encourage educators to model appropriate screen behaviours to the children.
- Encourage the promotion of productive sedentary experiences for rest and relaxation.
- Ensure that an appropriate balance between inactive and active time is maintained each day.
- Under no circumstances is the screen to be used as a reward or to manage challenging behaviours

Email and communication Etiquette

- All staff are required to respond to emails asking direct questions within 24 hours of receiving them. Emails received during the weekend or holidays will be responded to the following Monday.
- If emails are forwarded onto another department or individual of the school, a notification to the sender should be sent informing them of this.
- Emails being sent to parents must always be polite and formal in tone and context.
- As a courtesy to other staff members, all staff are required to either decline or accept invitations to meetings and events within the school using the RSVP function within Gmail.
- Emails to other staff members must not contain derogatory or defaming language and must always be diplomatic and polite.
 - The school email should only be used for internal and school use. Personal emails should be sent from alternative email addresses.

Nth Head Campus & Nth Balgowlah Campus:-Guidelines for use of technology within our School:

- Programs must be carefully selected and be suitable to the needs and development levels of each child using or watching various types of technology or media
- Technology is used to assist in expanding the content of the daily program and current affairs
- Programs are chosen that are engaging and age appropriate to children
- The use of TV and watching DVD's will be kept to a minimum
- Programs depicting violence e.g. graphic news reports will not be shown
- Children are to view 'G' rated programs only
- TV programs or videos will only be shown that have positive messages about relationships, family and life.
- All content will be socially and culturally considerate and appropriate

- Timeframes for 'screen time' according to Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines are:
 - Children younger than 2 years of age should not spend any time in front of a screen
 - Children 2 to 5 years of age should be limited to less than one hour per day
 - Children 5-12 years of age should limit screen time for entertainment to no more than 2 hours a day
- Children will be taught healthy concepts of digital use and citizenship as children are 'growing up digital'.
- Only quality developmentally appropriate interactive media will be used.
- All videos must be vetted by the teacher before delivery.
- Children will be educated on how to use a search engine and what to do if they do see something inappropriate.
- Safeguards to be implemented regarding "Child Safe" search engines.

The Farmhouse Montessori includes use of social media channels as part of its broader communications strategy and ensures that all activities are guided by a comprehensive plan detailing the rationale for use of social media, planned commencement and end dates, and detailed plans for the update and ongoing moderation of comments and feedback.

General use by staff:-

- Staff should use computing facilities in a reasonable manner. You should not install any inappropriate software and you should not reconfigure any machine you have access to against the advice of the appropriate authorized officer henceforth referred to as the principal. If in doubt you should seek the advice of the principal.
- Staff may not make substantial use of the Farmhouse Montessori School's IT facilities for private financial gain or for commercial purposes outside the scope of official duties or functions without specific authorization to do so.
- Farmhouse Montessori School employees must be efficient, economical and ethical in their use and management of public resources. Farmhouse Montessori School departmental communication devices and associated services, including telephones, mobile phones, computers, tablet devices, facsimiles, Internet, Intranet, email and broadband data services are resources provided for official school purposes, and all employees have a responsibility to ensure their proper and secure use.
- Staff and families are asked to not act unlawfully (such as breaching copyright) when using social media sites.
- Be clear that your personal views are yours, and not necessarily the views of the Farmhouse Montessori School
- Do not disclose confidential information obtained through work
- Use of the Farmhouse Montessori school, communication devices must comply with the school's record keeping requirements and employees must not engage in any use that may be considered questionable, controversial, offensive, or could potentially damage the school's reputation. Employees must adhere at all times to the School's Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.
- Employees must at all times comply with state and federal laws relating to the use of communication devices. Using the school's communication devices to seek out, access, store or send any material of an offensive, obscene, pornographic, threatening, abusive, violent or defamatory nature is prohibited. Employees who do so may find themselves subject to criminal proceedings and or disciplinary action.

Personal use of social media by the staff:-

The School recognises that staff may use social media in their personal life. This procedure does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit personal expression or online activities. To that end, the Farmhouse Montessori School staff are able to identify the Farmhouse as their place of work on social media.

However, staff should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to the school in certain circumstances via personal use of social media. Accordingly, staff should comply with this procedure to ensure that the risk of such damage is minimised when using social media. The guidance and directions in this procedure apply to your use of social media whether or not you identify yourself as an employee of the Farmhouse Montessori School.

You should be aware that if you have identified yourself as an employee of the Farmhouse, you must consider carefully what you post in your use of social media. You are personally responsible for the content you publish

in a personal capacity on any form of social media platform. When in doubt, you should seek guidance from the Principal on how to comply with the following obligations.

When you use social media

Staff must:

- only disclose and discuss publicly available information.
- ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant Farmhouse policies.
- expressly state on all postings which identify you as an employee that the stated views are your own and are not those of the Farmhouse Montessori School.
- adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and other applicable laws, and the Farmhouse Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics.
- be polite and respectful to all people you interact with.
- Staff are to make sure their personal online activities do not interfere with the performance of your job.
- Staff may make reasonable personal use of computing facilities provided by the Farmhouse Montessori School. Your personal use should not interfere with the performance of your duties or cause any damage or difficulty to computers or to networks, or any difficulty or distress to others.

Staff must not:

- post or share 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 you are authorised to speak as a representative of the School, nor give the impression that the views you express are those of the School.
- use the identity or likeness of another employee, contractor or other member of the Farmhouse.
- use or disclose any confidential information obtained in your capacity as an employee of the Farmhouse
- use your Farmhouse email address or any Farmhouse logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of your personal comment.
- post or share material that is, or might be construed as, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards another employee of the Farmhouse.
- make any comment, post or share any material that might otherwise cause damage to the Farmhouse's reputation or bring it into disrepute.
- You should be aware that the limitations placed on your use of social media by this procedure continue to apply to you following the cessation of your employment at the Farmhouse Montessori School.

The Farmhouse Montessori reserves the right to edit social media contributions that:

- are defamatory, abusive or hateful.
- include offensive, obscene or abusive language.
- violate copyright or other forms of licences and consents.
- encourage conduct that might constitute a criminal offence or give rise to civil liability, or otherwise violate any local, state, national or international law.
- contravene the information security policies, code of conduct, communication/social media policies of The Farmhouse Montessori.
- discuss or identify specific personal or departmental-related information.

Security & Protection of Information on Your Computer & your computer

The main points to be aware of in the context of computer use are:

- You should guard confidential material and personal information by the proper use of passwords to log in and other security measures.
- Not all computer systems are suitable for the storage of confidential information. You can get advice on this from the Principal.
- If you have a document that you wish to be stored as sensitive material and encrypted this must go to the PA who will encrypt with a password. This password will be kept in a secure location and the document will be release to you on request only. No staff member is to password protect any school documents without the express permission of the School Principal.

- You must not disclose passwords or other access codes to other persons.
- You must comply with the Data Protection Act, which requires that the Farmhouse Montessori School keeps personal information secure.
- When working with confidential information, you must take care not to leave it inappropriately on screen. You should not leave your computer logged on when unattended, unless it is in a secure location.
- You should observe the same standards of confidentiality for electronically held or generated information as for information held on paper.
- No school computers are to leave the school premises without the permission of the school principal.
- School computers. If taken home by staff, must be signed out and are not to be left unattended on the way to the home location e.g. they are not to be left in the car while you go shopping, and must be kept in a secure location at the home.
- Staff are to take all precautions with the transporting and safe storage of any equipment/computers etc if they take it off site.

If you have a concern about the inadequate protection of data, you should inform the school principal so that any necessary steps can be taken to safeguard the data.

All members of staff have an obligation to protect data and systems by following up-to-date recommendations to avoid damage from viruses and other malicious programs. All computers that are not currently backing up to Box Sync are to be backed up each week on a separate hard drive and this is to be handed in at the end of the Term to be backed up onto an offsite device. Please remember not to store your computer and backup unit in the same place.

Misuse of Computing Facilities

The Farmhouse Montessori School permits reasonable personal as well as professional use of computing facilities. You should be careful not to misuse these facilities, for instance by:

- Hacking – attempting to access systems or information within or outside the Farmhouse Montessori School without authority, or encouraging others to do so.
- Deliberately accessing from the Internet material which is counter either to legislation, Farmhouse Montessori School rules or policies (e.g. equal opportunities) or to commonly accepted standards, or is likely to be offensive to reasonable people. Members of staff may access this kind of material only for bona fide academic purposes. However, accidental access to such sites can take place; if you are concerned that such accidental access has taken place you may wish to report your concerns to an appropriate person e.g. the school principal.
- E-mail communications which constitute bullying or harassment.

Investigation of Misuse & Interception and Disciplinary Action

- The Farmhouse Montessori School needs procedures in order to be able to investigate any suspected misuse of computing facilities. Investigators may need to inspect any files held on any of the Farmhouse Montessori School's computing systems. These procedures will be applied infrequently and in a strictly controlled manner. Where inspection is deemed to be necessary, the Principal and or Board Members shall give permission for such access.
- As part of normal procedures, computers linked to networks may be scanned automatically for vulnerability and the principal may authorize the routine monitoring of Internet access generally, including e-mail traffic volume (but not content), within their local area networks.
- The School Principal and the Board of The Farmhouse Montessori School should decide in the light of the outcome of an investigation of possible misuse of computing facilities whether disciplinary action is appropriate, and if it is judged appropriate, instigate necessary action in accordance with the relevant disciplinary procedures concerned.

Implementation & Strategies

- Responsibilities, delegations, monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements The School Principal, is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the policy. All digital information must be classified to ensure it receives an appropriate level of protection.
- In classifying information, regards must be given to obligations imposed by relevant laws and regulations in particular the Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998, Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

Source

- Working with Children
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Fair Work Act
- National Quality Standard
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- The Australian Council on Children and the Media for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. (2011). *Television and young children: Quality, choice and the role of parents: What the experts and parents say*

Review

Date Reviewed	Modifications	Reviewed
Feb 2018	New Logo	March 2018
March 2018	New Format and policy created with updated information on limiting screen time.	March 2018
2018	No changes	2020
May 2020	Sources updated NQS added and document reformatted	2024