

## **Best Practice – Quality Area 7**

### **PURPOSE**

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) environment is continually changing. Services and the GRPSA office have access to a variety of technologies via fixed, wireless and mobile devices. While ICT is a cost-effective, timely and efficient tool for research, communication and management of a service, there are also legal responsibilities in relation to information privacy, security and the protection of employees, families and children.

State and federal laws, including those governing information privacy, copyright, occupational health and safety, anti-discrimination and sexual harassment, apply to the use of ICT. Illegal and inappropriate use of ICT resources includes pornography, fraud, defamation, breach of copyright, unlawful discrimination or vilification, harassment (including sexual harassment, stalking and privacy violations) and illegal activity, including illegal peer-to-peer file sharing.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **1. VALUES**

Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc is committed to:

- professional, ethical and responsible use of ICT at the service and GRPSA administration.
- providing a safe workplace for management, educators, staff and others using the service's ICT facilities
- safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of information received, transmitted or stored electronically
- ensuring that the use of the service's ICT facilities complies with all service policies and relevant government legislation
- providing management, educators and staff with online information, resources and communication tools to support the effective operation of the service.

#### **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement and volunteers at Inc. Services. This policy does **not** apply to children. Please refer to GRPSA Children's Use of ICT policy.

This policy applies to all aspects of the use of ICT including:

- internet usage
- electronic mail (email)
- electronic bulletins/notice boards
- electronic discussion/news groups
- weblogs (blogs)
- social networking

- file transfer
- file storage (including the use of end point data storage devices – refer to *Definitions*)
- file sharing
- video conferencing
- streaming media
- instant messaging
- online discussion groups and chat facilities
- subscriptions to list servers, mailing lists or other like services
- copying, saving or distributing files
- viewing material electronically
- printing material
- portable communication devices including mobile and cordless phones.

### 3. PROCEDURES

#### **The Approved Provider is responsible for:**

- ensuring that the use of the service's ICT complies with all relevant state and federal legislation (refer to *Legislation and standards*), and all service policies (including *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* and *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- authorising the access of educators, staff, volunteers and students to the service's ICT facilities, as appropriate
- providing clear procedures and protocols that outline the parameters for use of the service's ICT facilities (refer to Attachment 1 – Procedures for use of ICT at the service)
- embedding a culture of awareness and understanding of security issues at the service (refer to Attachment 2 – Social Media Guidelines)
- ensuring that effective financial procedures and security measures are implemented where transactions are made using the service's ICT facilities, e.g. handling fee and invoice payments, and using online banking
- ensuring that the service's computer software and hardware are purchased from an appropriate and reputable supplier
- identifying the need for additional password-protected email accounts for management, educators, staff and others at the service, and providing these as appropriate
- identifying the training needs of educators and staff in relation to ICT, and providing recommendations for the inclusion of training in ICT in professional development activities
- ensuring that procedures are in place for the regular backup of critical data and information at the service
- ensuring secure storage of all information at the service, including backup files (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*)
- adhering to the requirements of the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* in relation to accessing information on the service's computer/s, including emails
- considering encryption (refer to *Definitions*) of data for extra security
- ensuring that reputable anti-virus and firewall software (refer to *Definitions*) are installed on service computers, and that software is kept up to date
- developing procedures to minimise unauthorised access, use and disclosure of information and data, which may include limiting access and passwords, and encryption (refer to *Definitions*)

- ensuring that the service's liability in the event of security breaches, or unauthorised access, use and disclosure of information and data is limited by developing and publishing appropriate disclaimers (refer to *Definitions*)
- developing procedures to ensure data and information (e.g. passwords) are kept secure, and only disclosed to individuals where necessary e.g. to new educators, staff or parent advisor group
- developing procedures to ensure that all educators, staff, volunteers and students are aware of the requirements of this policy
- ensuring the appropriate use of endpoint data storage devices (refer to *Definitions*) by all ICT users at the service
- ensuring that all material stored on endpoint data storage devices is also stored on a backup drive, and that both device and drive are kept in a secure location
- ensuring compliance with this policy by all users of the service's ICT facilities
- ensuring that written permission is provided by parents/guardians for authorised access to the service's computer systems and internet by persons under 18 years of age (e.g. a student on placement at the service) (refer to Attachment 3 –Parent/guardian authorisation for under-age access to the Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc. ICT facilities).

**All Early Childhood Staff are responsible for:**

- complying with all relevant legislation and service policies, protocols and procedures, including those outlined in Attachments 1 and 2
- completing the authorised user agreement form if under 18 years of age
- keeping allocated passwords secure, including not sharing passwords and logging off after using a computer
- maintaining the security of ICT facilities
- accessing accounts, data or files on the service's computers only where authorisation has been provided
- co-operating with other users of the service's ICT to ensure fair and equitable access to resources
- ensuring confidential information is transmitted with password protection or encryption, as required
- ensuring no illegal material is transmitted at any time via any ICT medium
- using the service's email, messaging and social media facilities for service-related and lawful activities only
- using endpoint data storage devices (refer to *Definitions*) supplied by the service for service-related business only, and ensuring that this information is protected from unauthorised access and use
- ensuring that all material stored on an endpoint data storage device is also stored on a backup drive, and that both device and drive are kept in a secure location
- notifying the Approved Provider of any damage, faults or loss of endpoint data storage devices
- not using mobile phones or other personal devices during work time, unless authorised by management.
- ensuring electronic files containing information about children and families are kept secure at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).
- maintaining professional respectful relationships with parents/guardians

### **Breaches of this policy**

- Individuals who use ICT at the service or GRPSA office for unlawful purposes may be liable to criminal or civil legal action. This could result in serious consequences, such as a fine, damages and/or costs being awarded against the individual, or imprisonment. GRPSA will not defend or support any individual using the service's ICT facilities for an unlawful purpose.
- GRPSA may block access to internet sites where inappropriate use is identified.
- Employees who fail to adhere to this policy may have their access to the service's ICT facilities restricted/denied and/or be liable to counselling, disciplinary action or dismissal.
- Volunteers and students who fail to adhere to this policy may have their access to the service's ICT facilities restricted/denied

### **Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- reading and understanding this Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy
- complying with all state and federal laws, the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, and all service policies and procedures
- maintaining the privacy of any personal or health information provided to them about other individuals e.g. contact details.
- Responsible and respectful use of social networking when referring to any Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc Service or staff member or associated service
- Signing enrolment form – regarding arrangements photos and videos as explained on the enrolment form.

### **Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.**

### **EVALUATION**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider 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, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1: Procedures for use of ICT at the service
- Attachment 2: Social Media Guidelines
- Attachment 3: Parent/guardian authorisation for under-age access to the Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc ICT facilities

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc. on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012

Reviewed and updated: 27<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Reviewed and updated: May 2019

Reviewed and updated: August 2021

**REVIEW DATE: AUGUST 2024**

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **Procedures for use of ICT at the service or GRPSA administration**

#### **EMAIL USAGE**

- Content of emails and email addresses must always be checked before sending.
- When sending emails to multiple recipients, care should be taken to avoid the inappropriate disclosure of email addresses to a whole group of recipients; blind copying (BCC) should be used where appropriate.
- Always include a subject description in the subject line.
- Always include a disclaimer which is common to all users, on emails to limit liability.
- Be cautious about opening files or launching programs that have been received as an attachment via email from the email itself. Instead, save an attachment to disk and scan with anti-virus software before opening, and keep an eye out for unusual filenames.
- Never open emails if unsure of the sender.
- Check email accounts on a regular basis and forward relevant emails to the Approved Provider or appropriate parent advisory group members/staff.
- Remove correspondence that is no longer required from the computer regularly.
- Respond to emails as soon as is practicable.

#### **UNACCEPTABLE/INAPPROPRIATE USE OF ICT FACILITIES**

Users of the ICT facilities (and in particular, the internet, email and social media) provided by Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc must not:

- create or exchange messages that are offensive, harassing, obscene or threatening
- create, copy, transmit or retransmit chain emails (refer to *Definitions*), spam (refer to *Definitions*) or other unauthorised mass communication
- use the ICT facilities as a platform to gain unauthorised access to other systems
- carry out activities that are illegal, inappropriate or offensive to fellow employees or the public. Such activities include, but are not limited to, hate speech or material that ridicules/discriminates against others on the basis of race, nationality, creed, religion, ability/disability, gender or sexual orientation
- use the ICT facilities to access, download, create, store or distribute illegal, offensive, obscene or objectionable material (including pornography and sexually explicit material). It will not be a defence to claim that the recipient was a consenting adult
- use the ICT facilities to make any personal communication that could suggest that such communication was made in that person's official capacity as an employee or volunteer of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc
- conduct any outside business or engage in activities related to employment with another organisation
- play games, unless directly related to the educational and recreational program for children.
- assist any election campaign
- lobby any government organisation without prior GRPSA approval
- exchange any confidential or sensitive information held by Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc unless authorised as part of their duties
- publish the service's email address on a 'private' business card
- harass, slander, intimidate, embarrass, defame, vilify, seek to offend or make threats against another person or group of people
- breach copyright laws through making copies of, or transmitting, material or commercial software.

## **INFORMATION STORED ON COMPUTERS / ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

- Computer records containing personal, sensitive and/or health information, or photographs of children must be stored securely so that privacy and confidentiality is maintained. This information must not be removed from the service without authorisation, as security of the information could be at risk (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).
- Computer records containing personal, sensitive and/or health information, or photographs of children may need to be removed from the service from time-to-time for various reasons. In such circumstances, services must ensure that the information is transported, handled and stored securely so that privacy and confidentiality is always maintained.
- Computer users are not to view or interfere with other users' files or directories, knowingly obtain unauthorised access to information or damage, delete, insert or otherwise alter data without permission.
- Ensure all material stored on an endpoint data storage device is also stored on a backup drive, and that both device and drive are kept in a secure location.

## **BREACHES OF THIS POLICY**

- Individuals who use ICT at the service for unlawful purposes may be liable to criminal or civil legal action. This could result in serious consequences, such as a fine, damages and/or costs being awarded against the individual, or imprisonment. The Approved Provider will not defend or support any individual using the service's ICT facilities for an unlawful purpose.
- The service may block access to internet sites where inappropriate use is identified.
- Employees who fail to adhere to this policy may be liable to counselling, disciplinary action or dismissal.
- Management, educators, staff, volunteers and students who fail to adhere to this policy may have their access to the service's ICT facilities restricted/denied.

## ATTACHMENT 2

### Social Media Guidelines

#### Guidelines for service Facebook page (or other social networking platforms)

**Maintain confidentiality** – only post publicly available information. Don't disclose or discuss confidential information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of GRPSA unless you are authorised to do so.

**Be professional** – consider setting up a work social media profile to engage on service Facebook groups, rather than using your personal profile.

**Protect and respect privacy** – check the account privacy settings are appropriate for the scope of engagement you wish to undertake. Always protect your own privacy and personal information, and don't share the private details of others. Don't disclose details of private conversations unless you have obtained explicit consent from the relevant parties.

**Be impartial** – avoid statements that advocate or criticise policies of GRPSA, external organisations, government or political parties. Avoid conflicts of interest through endorsement or criticism of third-party providers, partners, products or services.

**Be respectful** – be courteous and polite, and sensitive to diversity. Avoid arguments and don't make personal attacks. Do not post obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful content.

**Be accurate** – make sure the information you publish is correct and cite sources where appropriate – people may make decisions based on information you post.

**Accountability** – always take responsibility for your actions. If you make a mistake, admit it, and where possible make public corrections in consultation with the EC Manager.

**Correct processes** – use the appropriate processes and follow policies for resolving complaints regarding your employment. Don't use social media to publicly complain about your employment.

**Think first** – review your content before you post it. Remember that you are responsible for your actions. You should consider the impact your activities could have on yourself and/or GRPSA. Use your common sense and best judgement. If you're not sure, check with the Nominated Supervisor/Educational Leader.

If in doubt, leave it out.

**ATTACHMENT 3**

**Parent/guardian authorisation for under-age access to the  
Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc ICT facilities**

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of placement: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ , am a parent/guardian of

\_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc *Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy* and agree to the conditions of use of the service's ICT facilities for the above-named student.

I also understand that Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc provides no censorship of access to ICT facilities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (parent/guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date