

Information Technology & Digital Communications Policy

1. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, the employer, students, volunteers and any other persons who have access to, or use the information technology facilities at the Centre.

This policy applies to all electronic equipment, fixed and portable, which receives, stores, displays, and forwards or generates material electronically. It covers applications, including information or electronic mail.

It is intended to encourage responsible action and to reflect a respect for the ability of all persons to exercise good judgement and to behave in a professional and ethical manner.

This policy is intended to operate within, and be consistent with, the existing Centre's policies and procedures.

All information technology facilities, and the information stored thereon or processed therein, remain the property of Annie Dennis Children's Centre.

2. Background

Electronic equipment (technology facilities) is a useful resource for research, communication and for conducting business. The Centre seeks to provide all employees, Committee members and parents with online information resources and communication tools, to support them in the education of their children and the operation of the Centre.

Legislation

This may include, but is not limited to:

- *Children's Services Act 1996*
- *Children's Services Regulations 2009*
- *Health records Act 2001 (Vic)*
- *Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986 (Cth)*
- *The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Centre's policies and procedures*

3. Policy Statement

Values

We are committed to:

- providing clear guidelines on the appropriate use of information technology facilities at the Centre
- preventing inappropriate use
- providing a safe workplace for employees, the employer and others using the Centre's information technology facilities
- maximising the protection needed to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of matters received, transmitted or stored electronically
- ensuring the use of the Centre's information technology facilities complies with the Centre's policies and relevant legislation

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to:

- provide clear guidelines for the Centre's information technology facilities with a safe working environment
- protect confidential and sensitive information
- prevent inappropriate use.

4. Disclaimer

Although the internet and email are valuable resources they are often open to hazardous programs including, but not limited to, virus, ad ware, spy ware and foreign intrusion by outside sources.

For this reason the Centre cannot guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of matters transmitted or stored electronically.

5. Procedures

The Director and Assistant Director are responsible for:

- ensuring office email accounts are checked on a regular basis and relevant emails are forwarded to appropriate members of the Committee of Management and staff members
- identifying the training needs of existing staff and new staff for inclusion in professional development
- ensuring current virus protection software is installed on all of the Centre's technology information facilities
- authorising staff members access to the Centre's information technology facilities
- ensuring no unauthorised access to the Centre's information technology facilities
- ensuring the Centre's information technology facilities are loaded with programs approved by the Committee of Management

Each authorised staff member of the Centre's information technology facilities:

- must comply with all relevant legislation and policies
- is not to attempt to access or transmit at any time, via email or any other medium, material (language and images), which a reasonable person could consider indecent, offensive, profane, sexually explicit or objectionable
- must not harass, slander, intimidate, embarrass, defame, vilify, seek to offend or make threats against another person, including Committee of Management, Centre management, work colleagues or other organisations via electronic mail or other medium
- is not to make copies of, or transmit, commercial software illegally in breach of copyright
- is not to participate in spamming or sending mass unsolicited email
- is not to transmit confidential information inappropriately
- must not attempt to access or transmit at any time, via email or any other medium material that is illegal
- must not use the Centre's information technology facilities to access pornographic material or to create, store or distribute pornographic material. It will not be an acceptable defence to claim that the recipient was a consenting adult
- must adhere to the Centre's information privacy policy in regard to emails and information accessed on the Centre's information technology facilities
- is not to access accounts, data or files on the Centre's information technology facilities which they are not authorised to access
- is responsible for cooperating with other staff members of the Centre's information technology facilities to ensure fair and equitable access to the facilities, and
- must ensure that the Centre's information technology portable facilities (notebooks) are stored and locked in a secure place after each use.

6. Backing up

All staff members responsible for using the Centre's information technology facilities are required to utilise the component of the shared hard drive for backing up all data. If the Centre's information technology facilities limit this capacity and staff members back up on individual hard drives, they are required to maintain back up of the all the files. In the event of a crash, the Centre's business processes could be promptly reinstated.

7. Personal use

All staff members must not use the Centre's information technology facilities for personal profit, for the Centre's undertakings not under the control, or without knowledge, of the Director/Assistant Director. Personal use may be permitted during lunch breaks with the approval of the director/assistant director. No staff member is to use any technology resources in a manner that adversely affects the normal business operation of them, including game playing.

The Centre respects the privacy of staff but reserves the right to monitor the use of the Centre's information technology facilities. This includes accessing all applications, if necessary, on individual computers.

8. Social networking sites

Off site

Social networking sites provide tremendous potential opportunities for staying in touch with friends, family and work colleagues. As early childhood educators we have a professional image to uphold and how we conduct ourselves online helps determine this image. As reported in the media there have been instances of educators demonstrating professional misconduct while engaging in inappropriate dialogue about their place of employment and/or work colleagues.

All persons employed at Annie Dennis Children's Centre:

- must not harass, slander, intimidate, embarrass, defame, vilify, seek to offend or make threats against work colleagues, Committee of Management, Centre management or other organisations via social networking sites
- must not discuss confidential information or publicly criticise Centre policies or procedures via social networking sites, and
- must not post work related images of work colleagues, Centre events, children and families without the consent of the individual persons involved .

On site

All persons employed at Annie Dennis Children's Centre:

- must not use the Centre's information technology facilities to access any social networking sites.

9. Electronic correspondence out of work hours

On some occasions staff may find it convenient to contact the Centre via personal email to forward any messages especially if they are on annual leave or term break. It is expected that staff will follow the procedures as stated above at all times. However, this is not the normal course of day to day communication and is not encouraged.

No staff member is to make unauthorised contact with Committee of Management or Centre management to their personal email without prior consent. If staff wish to meet or discuss an issue which concerns them, this must be done within the confines of the Centre's relevant policies and procedures (Staff Grievance Policy).

No Committee of Management member or parent is to make unauthorised contact with staff to their personal email without prior consent.

10. Digital Cameras

The use of digital cameras is integral to the children's programs for documenting children's learning. The Centre is, however, aware that digital

photos may be used in inappropriate ways if put on to the internet or accessed by unauthorised people.

All staff are responsible for:

- ensuring that digital cameras remain on site except for work related reasons that include excursions, home visits training and other professional development sessions and,
- seek authorisation from the Director/Assistant Director to use their own digital camera for use at the Centre.

The Director/Assistant Director is responsible for ensuring:

- parents/guardians have provided permission by signing a consent form included in the Centre enrolment process allowing digital photos to be taken of their child for individual portfolios, displays in rooms, newsletters, brochures, Centre website, television, film coverage and with other children to be used in another child's portfolio

When using digital cameras each staff member:

- will not take photos of children who are not dressed or toileting
- will not keep personal albums of digital photos or copy digital photos of children for personal use
- may email photos of children to their parents/guardians only if the photos do not include other children unless the other parent/guardian has given consent during the enrolment process. (Note that the Centre has no influence over the possible future use and disposal of these photographs of children at the Centre once they have been emailed)
- must ensure that a child's portfolio provided to parents/guardians when they leave the Centre only contain digital photos of other children where the other children's parents/guardians have provided the appropriate consent, and
- must delete children's photos at the end of each year.

11. Electronic Correspondence

Electronic correspondence by families to staff

The Centre prefers that families contact the Centre via phone if they wish to speak directly to Centre management or their child's educator. Electronic correspondence may be used for general Centre enquires via the Centre's email address and will be forwarded to the relevant staff to follow up directly with the parent/guardian. In order to maintain families' privacy and confidentiality we ask all families to observe the following:

- use the Centre's electronic correspondence facility for general enquires only, and
- do not use the Centre's electronic correspondence facility to disclose information regarding individual children's issues and/or concerns.

Generally, all early childhood educators will have access to electronic correspondence when they are allocated program planning time one day a fortnight/weekly.

Electronic correspondence by Centre staff to families

All educational programmers have the capacity to correspond with families electronically. This type of communication will not be used to replace face to face communication between educators and families, but rather, as a tool to assist educator's understanding each child's broader interests and experiences away from the Centre. This information may be used in the educational programs and/or portfolios to document children's learning.

12. Privacy and security

Photographs of children will be password protected and stored securely so that the privacy and confidentiality of all information is maintained.

The Director/Assistant Director must be informed of passwords or other security identifiers. These passwords will be kept confidential and stored securely and will not be shared with other staff members.

All staff using the Centre's information technology facilities are not to view or interfere with other staff member's files or directories, or knowingly obtain unauthorised access to information or damage, delete, insert or otherwise alter data without permission.

13. Breaches of the policy

Staff who fail to adhere to the procedures set out in this policy may be liable to counselling, disciplinary action, personal 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 even imprisonment. The Centre will not defend or support any staff member who uses the Centre's information technology facilities for an unlawful purpose.

Parents/guardians or other users failing to adhere to this policy may be expelled from the Centre in line with the Centre's constitution.

Volunteers and/or students failing to adhere to the policy may have access to the Centre's information technology facilities denied or have their placement terminated.

14. Key responsibilities and authorities

- The Director/Assistant Director is responsible for implementing, enforcing and evaluating this policy.
- Employees are responsible for complying with this policy.
- All users of the Centre's information technology facilities are responsible for their personal adherence to the policy.
- Use of any of the Centre's information technology facilities, and above stated procedures, constitutes acceptance of this policy

15. Evaluation

In order to assess whether this policy has achieved its purpose the Committee of Management will:

- Monitor any complaints received in relation to the use of the Centre's computer and online resources, and
- Take into account reports from employees, Committee members and Centre management in relation to this policy.

The **Information Technology Use Policy** is linked to the National Quality Standards 2012
Quality Area 7 Leadership and service management
Standard 7.3 Management and administrative systems enable the effective provision of a quality service

Date Approved by the Com 19 September 2011

Next review date September 2013

Key source documents

Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV), model policy *Information Technology Use*