

Electronic Devices & Photography Policy



Background

Beaconsfield Neighbourhood Centre (BNC) has a duty of care for all children attending our childcare service. BNC has zero tolerance for child abuse and actively promotes the Victorian Child Safe Standards. Our policies and procedures safeguard children from child abuse and harm and prioritise their safety and wellbeing. Establishing child safe practices for the use of electronic devices and photography is an essential part of ensuring children attending our service are safe and protected.

In response to concerns about child safety in childcare, the Victorian government is implementing a ban on personal devices, specifically those that can take images or videos, in childcare centres. This ban is scheduled to take effect by September 26, 2025. Further legislative reform is being considered by governments and BNC remains committed to enacting measures to enhance child safety.

Purpose

The aims of this policy are:

- To define the appropriate taking, storage, sharing and retention of images and videos of children and meet legislative requirements.
- Minimize distractions, protect children's privacy, and ensure educators maintain active supervision.
- To clearly outline the acceptable use of personal devices, such as mobile phones, cameras, and tablets, while working with children.

Policy Statements

When used intentionally as part of implementing an educational program, electronic devices can be effectively utilised during the provision of education and care, including to assist in documenting a child's learning. This policy aims to balance the benefits of technology with the need to protect children from potential risks associated with digital media. The use of any device should not impede the active supervision of children.

Personal electronic devices, especially those capable of taking images or videos, are restricted or prohibited during direct interaction with children.

Personal devices may be kept in certain designated areas in the Children's Room during a session and accessed by educators only during their break times. The specific areas are:

- the storeroom along with other personal property
- in the office nook/kitchenette area for charging purposes

Staff may use personal devices during a session for essential purposes only with prior approval from the Children's Room Coordinator or Centre Coordinator. Essential purposes for which use and/or possession of a personal electronic device may be authorised during a session include:

- communication during an excursion or in an emergency situation involving a lost child, injury to child or staff member, or other serious incident, or in the case of a lockdown or evacuation of the service premises
- personal health requirements, e.g. heart or blood sugar level monitoring
- disability, e.g. where a personal electronic device is an essential means of communication
- family necessity, e.g. a staff member with an ill or dying family member

- technology failure, e.g. when a temporary outage of service-issued electronic devices has occurred
- local emergency event occurring, to receive emergency notifications through government warning systems, for example, bushfire evacuation text notification.

A log of authorisations is kept in the Children's Room via Personal Electronic Device Authorisation Forms. If obtaining written authorisation in advance is not reasonably practicable, a form should be completed as a record at the earliest available opportunity following a verbal authorisation.

The Approved Provider will review and sign off on authorisations at the next Committee of Management meeting.

Photography

Only service-issued electronic devices are permitted to be used when taking images or videos of children while providing education and care.

Photographs and videos are taken during sessions in the Children's Room to:

- support the individual learning of each child for their formal record.
- record children's work and activities within the licensed childcare environment.
- reassure or connect with families regarding their individual child's accomplishments, needs, moods and behaviour.

Photographs recorded at the Service as part of a normal day are taken using a digital camera or service owned electronic device and are only taken by members of the staff team.

Families provide general written permission/consent for photographing or recording video of their child and themselves within the Centre (see: Membership Form). Further details are in the BNC Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. For photography permissions related to our licensed childcare service, families are asked to complete a Media Consent Form upon enrolment to ascertain consent for certain specific purposes. If families do not respond or complete this form, their permission will be deemed to be not granted for any purpose. Only children who have written permission from their parent/guardian will be included in any photography. A record of all children who are NOT to be photographed will be developed, maintained and shared with educators. This record will remain private and confidential to staff only. Parents/carers have the choice to change their consent options by alerting the staff in writing of their altered permission decisions.

We treat all individuals in photographs/videos with dignity and respect, and recognise that there are cultural differences and sensitivities related to photography. Children participate in decisions affecting them, including permission to have photographs taken of them. Children of parents/carers who do not wish their child to be photographed or children who express that they do not want to be photographed are provided with alternative activities to engage them whilst other children are photographed.

Photographs, video or other recordings of children are securely stored with password protection and disposed of at the end of each year if the child is no longer enrolled at the Service.

Exceptions are:

- When explicit permission has been given by parents to use a photograph in the Centre's advertising or social media, including printed versions.

- Keeping records for compliance or future verification and referral purposes including medical records containing photographs or a copy of messages exchanged via text or email with the parents which may include photographs.

Parents must be aware that photographs may be taken by other parents at various times of the year (e.g. during an end-of-year production, party, or other event). Educators will make every effort to monitor photography in these situations but may be unable to prevent some instances of a child's inclusion in other parents' photos. Parents should make appropriate decisions regarding supervision and/or inclusion of their children at these events if they do not wish their image to be captured.

Inappropriate images or videos

Inappropriate images or videos are any that are not directly relevant to the child's participation in the activities at our licensed childcare service. Examples of inappropriate (and potentially illegal) images or videos include where a child is not appropriately dressed, in a position that could be perceived as sexualised in nature, is anxious or experiencing or demonstrating distress or dysregulation. Bathrooms, nappy change rooms, and areas where there is not a clear line of sight by other staff members are considered "No Photography" zones.

Inappropriate sharing of images or videos

It is inappropriate for an image or video of a child to be shared to platforms beyond the intended educational purpose of the image or video. Any image or video recording of a child can become inappropriate if shared in the wrong context or for an unintended purpose. This includes if an individual transfers images to their own account or device either directly or via the cloud, for example, to post images or videos on social media or other applications or software platforms that were not its intended purpose.

Roles and Responsibilities

Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide suitable service issued electronic device. • Enact consequences for violation of this policy. • Approved Provider to review and sign off Personal Electronic Device Authorisation forms.
Children's Room Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor any use of electronic devices in the Children's Room. • Ensure that photographs taken by educators support the children's learning and record children's individual progress. • Administration of forms and logs. • Manage the storage, distribution and deletion of captured images.
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of and adhere to the policy. • Report any concerns about the use of electronic devices or photography to the Children's Room Coordinator or Centre Coordinator.
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear permission preferences on Centre forms. • Take photos of other children only with the parent's consent • Refrain from sharing images that include other children.

Related documents

Personal Electronic Device Authorisation Form

Media Consent Form

Membership Form

Privacy & Confidentiality Policy

Document History

Version	Title	Author	Authorised	Date	Changes to Previous
1	Electronic Devices & Photography Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Aug 2025	Original