# eSafety checklist for early learning services

eSafety Early Years
Online safety for under 5s

**Name of service:** ______________________________

**Completed by (team or individual):** ______________________________

**Checklist completed on (date):** ______________________________

**Checklist shared with the service team on (date):** ______________________________

## Aim

The aim of this checklist is to ensure that your early learning service has the processes, policies and practices to support a safe online environment. This includes making sure your service:

- understands the risks associated with being online for children, families, educators and the service more broadly
- provides experiences for children that help them learn and remember key strategies for being safe online
- supports staff through clear policies and practices
- works with families to share information about safe online practices at home and in the community
- has policies and procedures in place for the safe use of digital technologies and online environments, and takes reasonable steps to ensure they are followed
- follows the National Model Code for Taking Images or Videos of Children while Providing Early Childhood Education and Care (National Model Code)
- aligns with principle 8 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
- identifies strengths and areas for improvement in current online safety measures, and documents them in quality improvement plans.

## How to use this checklist

eSafety's checklist for early learning services is organised into five sections:

- Policy
- Educational Program and Practice
- Infrastructure and Technology
- Educators
- Families

Each section has a list of questions to help you assess your service's policy, programs and practices for online safety considerations. Each question is referenced against the National Quality Framework (NQF), including the Education and Care Services National Law (National Law), the Education and Care Services National Regulations (National Regulations), the National Quality Standard (NQS) the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), and the My Time, Our Place: The Framework for School Age Care (MTOP). These can all form evidence for Assessment and Rating.

Go through each section and think about whether it reflects the way your service uses technology. Then tick the box that applies (‘Yes’, ‘No’ or ‘Not yet’) and write down examples or notes that help explain your decision. For example, if you tick ‘Not yet’, note who is responsible for completing it.

Please note: it is a requirement under National Regulations to have policies and procedures in place for the safe use of digital technologies and online environments at the service (regulation 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (regulation 170). These policies and procedures must consider the following matters:

- The taking, use, storage and destruction of images and videos of children being educated and cared for by the service.
- Obtaining authorisation from parents to take, use and store images and videos of children being educated and cared for by the service.
- The use of any optical surveillance device at the service (for example, closed-circuit television).
- The use of any digital device issued by the service.
- The use of digital devices by children being educated and cared for by the service.

If you or your team need more information to answer parts of the checklist, refer to eSafety’s Professional Learning Module: Creating a Safe Learning Environment. This module explains the five checklist sections in more detail, features expert research, and links out to supporting documentation and examples. The checklist has been embedded in the module for ease of use.

Further information is available in the NQF Online Safety Guide, which helps all staff understand and use digital technologies safely with children. This guide has a range of resources including the NQF Online Safety Guide self-assessment and risk assessment tool.

These resources can be used along with this checklist to identify strengths and areas for improvement to include in quality improvement plans.

## Policy

Ensure your service has a written policy and procedures describing the safe use of digital technologies and online environments at your service.

| Key questions | Check and explain |
|---|---|
| **Does your policy align with the National Model Code for Taking Images or Videos of Children while Providing Early Childhood Education and Care (National Model Code)? Does your policy adopt parts of the National Model Code, for example:**<br>• Only service-issued devices are to be used to take images or videos of children while providing education and care.<br>• Personal electronic devices that can take images or videos, and personal storage and file transfer media, are not to be in the possession of any person while providing education and care and working directly with children, unless for authorised essential purposes such as emergencies, health and family needs.<br>• Strict controls are to be in place for appropriately storing and retaining children's images and recordings. | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Does your policy clearly explain the rules for how children and educators should use technology and online platforms safety? This should cover things like:**<br>• age-appropriate access to technology<br>• the taking of photos and videos<br>• the use of service name/location on social media<br>• personal and professional use of social media by employees.<br>NQS: Element 7.1.2 | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Does your policy detail procedures and processes around the taking, use, storage and destruction of images and videos of children being educated and cared for by the service?**<br>NQS: Element 7.1.2<br>National Regulations: regulation 168 | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Does your privacy and confidentiality policy explain how the personal data (for example, names and photos) of children and families can be shared online (for example, by email, social media or cloud storage)?**<br>NQS: Element 7.1.2 | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |

| | |
|---|---|
| **If your service uses an online parent communication tool, does its data storage and sharing procedure comply with relevant legislation, including the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) or relevant state and territory legislation? To check, review the tool's privacy policy (this can usually be found in-app or on their website). Look for things like information on data storage (Australia or overseas), who has access, and how data is deleted when it is no longer needed.**<br>NQS: Element 7.1.2 | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Does your policy require signed parent/ carer consent to take, use and store personal information, images and videos of children being educated and cared for by the service?**<br>NQS: Element 7.1.2<br>National Regulations: regulation 168 | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Does your policy explain how children, educators and parents can raise concerns about digital technologies?**<br>NQS: Element 2.2.2 | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Is there a clear process for recording breaches of policy?**<br>NQS: Element 2.2.2 | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Does your policy have links to support agencies including eSafety, Kids Helpline, Headspace and Parentline?**<br>NQS: Element 2.2.2<br>EYLF: Practice – Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches<br>MTOP: Practice – Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Are there timelines for policy review?**<br>NQS: Element 7.2.1<br>EYLF: Principle – Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning<br>MTOP: Principle – Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |

## Educational program and practice

Ensure your service has online safety principles embedded in your program and practice.

| Key questions | Check and explain |
|---|---|
| **Does your service provide children with the opportunity to engage in digital play through communicating, creating and consuming digital content in safe and developmentally appropriate ways?**<br>NQS: Element 1.1.1<br>EYLF: Learning outcome – Children are confident and involved learners<br>MTOP: Learning outcome – Children and young people are confident and involved learners | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Do your educators regularly discuss concepts of 'being online' or 'the internet' with children so that they continue to develop their understanding?**<br>NQS: Element 1.2.1<br>EYLF: Learning outcome – Children have a strong sense of identity<br>MTOP: Learning outcome – Children and young people have a strong sense of identity | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Do your educators teach and regularly remind children about online safety (for example, asking permission before they take a photo)?**<br>NQS: Element 1.2.2<br>EYLF: Learning outcome – Children have a strong sense of wellbeing<br>MTOP: Learning outcome – Children and young people have a strong sense of wellbeing | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Do children know what to do if they encounter inappropriate materials online?**<br>NQS: Element 5.2.2<br>EYLF: Learning outcome – Children are effective communicators<br>MTOP: Learning outcome – Children and young people are effective communicators | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Is online behaviour included in discussions and activities promoting respectful relationships?**<br>NQS: Element 5.2.2<br>EYLF: Learning outcome – Children are confident and involved learners<br>MTOP: Learning outcome – Children and young people are confident and involved learners | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |

## Infrastructure and technology

Ensure your service has online safety principles embedded in your program and practice.

| Key questions | Check and explain |
|---|---|
| **Do you have a record of all the technologies you have in your service, and which of these are connected to the internet?**<br>NQS: Element 7.1.2 | □ **Yes** □ **No** □ **Not yet** |
| **Do the devices at your service have filters or settings that block harmful or adult content, and do you have monitoring in place to ensure that devices are being used safely?**<br>NQS: Element 7.1.2 | □ **Yes** □ **No** □ **Not yet** |
| **Are your device settings at a level of privacy that reflects data protection laws? Data protection laws (such as the Privacy Act 1988) mean that you must only collect information you need (don't gather extra personal data 'just in case'), keep it secure (for example, passwords, encryption), share it only with consent (unless legally required), and delete or de-identify it when it's no longer needed.**<br>NQS: Element 7.1.2 | □ **Yes** □ **No** □ **Not yet** |

## Educators

Ensure your educators model safe online practices for young children and know your service's online safety policies.

| Key questions | Check and explain |
|---|---|
| **Do your educators provide adequate supervision when young children are using digital technology?**<br>NQS: Element 2.2.1<br>EYLF: Practice – Responsiveness to children<br>MTOP: Practice – Collaboration with children and young people<br>National Law: section 165 | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Have your educators engaged in professional learning about online safety (such as eSafety's professional learning modules and the NQF Online Safety Guide), enabling them to identify and mitigate the risks associated with being online?**<br>NQS: Element 7.2.3;<br>EYLF: Practice – Continuity of learning and transitions<br>MTOP: Practice – Continuity and transitions | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Do you provide educators with regular opportunities to engage in ongoing, informal professional learning (for example, updates at staff meetings, sharing short resources) so they have up-to-date information about the risks and changing practices in online safety?**<br>NQS: Element 7.2.3;<br>EYLF: Principle – Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning<br>MTOP: Principle – Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Are your educators aware of (and compliant with) your guidelines around privacy and their use of social media for both professional and personal purposes?**<br>NQS: Element 7.2.3;<br>EYLF: Principle – Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning<br>MTOP: Principle – Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Do you regularly involve educators in the development and review of your online safety policies?**<br>NQS: Element 7.2.1;<br>EYLF: Principle – Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning<br>MTOP: Principle – Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |

## Families

Ensure your service is providing regular, quality information to your families about being safe online.

| Key questions | Check and explain |
|---|---|
| **Do you have a parent-engagement strategy to communicate appropriate online safety information?**<br>NQS: Element 6.1.1;<br>EYLF: Principle – Partnerships with families<br>MTOP: Principle – Partnerships | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Are there processes in place to ensure children and parents/carers who speak languages other than English understand your online safety policy?**<br>NQS: Element 6.1.3<br>EYLF: Practice – Cultural responsiveness<br>MTOP: Practice – Cultural responsiveness | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Does your policy explain how families can raise online safety issues in appropriate ways (for example, through agreed communication channels such as email or meetings)?**<br>NQS: Element 6.1.3<br>EYLF: Principle – Partnerships<br>MTOP: Principle – Partnerships | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Have you involved parents/carers in the development and review of your online safety policies (for example, through surveys, inviting feedback or holding short information sessions)?**<br>NQS: Element 6.1.1<br>EYLF: Principle – Partnerships<br>MTOP: Principle – Partnerships | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |
| **Do you provide your families with information on where to go for help with online safety issues, including eSafety?**<br>NQS: Element 6.1.3<br>EYLF: Principle – Partnerships<br>MTOP: Principle – Partnerships | □ Yes □ No □ Not yet |

When this checklist has been completed, ensure it is shared with educators and families to show them what your service is doing to improve children's online safety. You might do this through a staff meeting, newsletter, family information session, or by putting a summary on your noticeboard. You can also share key points with community partners (such as local schools) to help keep messaging about online safety consistent as children move from early learning into primary school.

Ensure this checklist is reviewed and updated regularly to reflect advances in technology, new online safety resources and data protection laws.

**Date for review and update:** ____________________