

Social Media Policy

Policy Relevant to:	All staff, Educators & families
Last Reviewed:	January 2021
Next Review:	January 2023
NQF:	1.1.1, 1.1.3, 1.3.3, 7.1.2
NQS:	7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.2
National Law	84, 181, 183

Purpose

Being part of Adventure Patch Services entails a position of trust and responsibility. We aim to ensure that Adventure Patch, children, educators, and/or families are not compromised in any form on Facebook or any other social media platform and that all social media usage complies with our philosophy, relevant policies, and the code of conduct.

Implementation

Social media is defined as:

"Forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)" (Merriam-Webster dictionary).

We recognise that within Adventure Patch operations, there are many advantages in using social media to network. However, it is important to approach usage with caution, through careful and systematic management. Whilst healthy debate may provide thought-provoking discussion, there are guidelines in place to ensure that our services remain open and welcoming for children, families, and staff.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations recognise the importance of safe physical and online environments to promote safety and wellbeing of all children. Adventure Patch has the responsibility to ensure children and educators are protected from harm when they engage with digital technology, including Social Media.

This policy applies to all forms of social media including (but not limited to):

- Social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
- Image sharing sites e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, and Imgur
- Music/dance videos e.g. Tik Tok
- Video hosting sites e.g. YouTube and Vimeo
- Community blogs e.g. Tumblr and Medium
- Discussion sites e.g. Reddit and Quora

Service Facebook Account

Adventure Patch and its services have Facebook accounts to converse and share information with our families and community. These are administered by the organisations Administration Team and service co-ordinators.

Only currently enrolled families and staff will have access to our service's Facebook pages. The pages are locked as "Privacy type: Closed: Limited public content. Members can see all content."

The intent for Adventure Patch services' Facebook pages is to:

- Keep families in touch with what's happening at the services, including upcoming and special events.
- Connect with other parents and share thoughts about programs, policies, and procedures.
- Provide an avenue to seek feedback from parents and provide appropriate research-based information on common child-rearing issues.
- Provide educational information to families and employees.

NOTE: Adventure Patch Facebook accounts must not be used for personal comments or discussions.

Privacy

- All staff and educators must remain aware that they represent, and could be identified, as an employee of Adventure Patch through any online activity.
- Staff and educators must maintain appropriate privacy of families, employees, students, children, and volunteers, including when they have obtained permission to publish content to Adventure Patch Facebook accounts.
- Absolutely no written content will be published to Facebook without written permission of families to whom the content relates.
- Adventure Patch will gain written permission from families prior to posting photos of children.
- Passwords will not be shared without authorisation from management.
- Adventure Patch will remain up to date with any changes to Facebook ensuring privacy settings remain up to date.

Adventure Patch will:

- Obtain written authorisation from a child's parents/guardians prior to posting any comment or photos of their child to Facebook pages.
- Ensure personal information about families, children and staff is not posted online.
- Ensure the highest level of privacy settings are established and maintained on the account.
- Ensure all passwords are kept confidential.
- Log out of Facebook when not in use and prior to leaving the site.
- Regularly scan online content related to Adventure Patch services to ensure appropriateness.
- Adhere to our *Complaints and Grievance Policy* and procedures to investigate any occurrences where a person working at Adventure Patch may:
 - post photos or information of Adventure Patch services or children;
 - defame, harass, or bully any other person who works at the Service or is connected to the Service.
- ensure that any staff or educator found guilty of any Facebook misconduct (on both Adventure Patch Facebook pages and any private page) is aware that this may result in termination of employment or cessation of contract.



Adventure Patch will not:

- Access personal Facebook accounts or any other social media accounts on any workplace device.
- Access personal Facebook or any other social media accounts whilst educating and caring for children.
- Post any photos taken of the children enrolled at the service on their personal Facebook or any other personal social media account.
- Post any information about Adventure Patch, colleagues, children, or families on any personal social media account.
- Vilify, harass, or bully any other person who works at Adventure Patch, family or community member connected to Adventure Patch services.
- Post offensive or derogatory comments or information that could bring their professional standing or that of Adventure Patch into disrepute.
- Use their personal camera or phones to take photos or video whilst at Adventure Patch services.

Personal Social Media Accounts

- Educators and staff members are to use their own personal discretion when adding a family of Adventure Patch services as a 'friend' on Facebook or any other social media.
- Adventure Patch does not recommend that educators and staff add families of services to personal social media accounts as they will still be seen as a representative of Adventure Patch and required to uphold Adventure Patch's Code of Conduct on all posts.
- It is extremely important not to post information about Adventure Patch, colleagues, children, or families on personal social media accounts, as this not only contravenes the Adventure Patch policies and code of conduct, but is considered a breach of the Commonwealth's *Privacy Act 1988* and *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.
- Families are asked to respect that educators and staff may have a personal policy on adding families to personal social media accounts due to their professional philosophy, and that Adventure Patch does not recommend staff to have families as friends on their private account.
- If adding families to personal social media accounts, educators will adhere to relevant policies, including the Code of Conduct of the Service.

Consequences for inappropriate conduct

For inappropriate conduct to be unlawful, there is a need to demonstrate a connection between the behaviour and the employment relationship that:

- Is likely to cause serious damage to the relationship between the employee and Adventure Patch.
- Damages or harms Adventure Patch's interest or reputation.
- Is incompatible with the employee's duties in the education and care sector.

A person who has been involved in inappropriate conduct may require reprimand as per Adventure Patch's *Code of Conduct Policy*. This may lead to termination of their position.



Continuous Quality Improvement

Adventure Patch will continue to evaluate and assess our online safety practices through critical reflections, checklists, professional learning and discussions with families and staff.

Adventure Patch strongly recommends that educators and staff complete online training through the eSafety Commissioner to ensure they remain up to date with current research and are aware of how to report inappropriate content on social media sites.

Resources

Australian Government Office of the eSafety commission www.esafety.gov.au/early-years
eSafety Early Years Online safety for under 5s. <https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-02/Early-years-booklet.pdf>
eSafety Early Years Checklist <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/esafety-early-years-program-for-educators/checklist>

Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>
Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
eSafety Commissioner: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/esafety-early-years-program-for-educators>
Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020).
Privacy Act 1988.
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
Revised National Quality Standard (2018).

