



Physical Activity and Screen Time Policy

Rationale:

Physical activity is essential for children to grow, learn and develop optimally. Benefits include better cognitive and academic outcomes, and improved heart health, fitness, sleeping patterns, and mental wellbeing.

Screen time is associated with poorer physical, social, and intellectual development, though offered in moderation, can have some benefits. Unfortunately, however, most Australian children get too much recreational screen time.

Pennant Hills Before and After School Care Service (PHBASC) (including Vacation Care) plays a vital role in children's physical activity and screen time. Children who attend PHBASC spend a considerable part of their day there and generally attend regularly, so the activities they do at PHBASC substantially influence their ongoing daily activity patterns and lifestyle. Therefore, by having a service-wide policy that ensures a healthy balance of physical activity and screen time, OSHC services can positively impact the health and wellbeing of many children.

Objectives:

This policy has been developed to:

- Encourage children to achieve their recommended daily amount of physical activity and screen time every day in PHBASC and Vacation Care.
- Assist PHBASC services to provide both outdoor and indoor environments that offer ample opportunities for children to be active.
- Assist PHBASC educators to model and facilitate healthy physical activity and screen time behaviours.
- Ensure families, children and new educators are informed of the service's physical activity and screen time policy.

Implementation Times:

Every day: The policy will be implemented daily in before school care, after school care, and vacation care, within reason.

Exceptions: The policy may not be implemented in exceptional circumstances, such as inclement weather (eg wet weather or extreme heat). In addition, it may occasionally not be implemented, for example, on the last day of term. However, exceptions should not be made every week (eg it is not acceptable to disregard the policy every Friday).

Scheduling of Physical Activity:

Children will be offered energetic outdoor (and indoor) play daily between the following hours:

- **Before school session:** from 7.30am to 8.15am (totalling at least 45 minutes for energetic play, preferably more, and preferably later in the session, when most children are in attendance).
- **After school session:** from 3.30pm to 5.30pm (totalling at least 90 minutes for energetic play, preferably more, and preferably earlier in the session, when most children are in attendance).
- **Vacation care:** from 9.00am to 10.15am and from 1.00pm to 2.30pm (totalling at least 2-3 hours for energetic play, preferably more).

Scheduling of Screen Time:

Children will occasionally be offered recreational screen time between the following hours (note: screen time for homework is not recreational screen time, so does not count towards these limits):

- **Before school session:** from 8.15am to 8.45am (no more than 30 minutes, preferably less or none, and minimising scheduling screen time opportunity at the same time as physical activity).
- **After school session:** from 5.30pm to 6.00pm (no more than 60 minutes, preferably less or none, and minimising scheduling screen time opportunity at the same time as physical activity).
- **Vacation care:** from 1pm to 3pm (no more than 2 hours, preferably less or none, and minimising scheduling screen time opportunity at the same time as physical activity).

Environments for Physical Activity:

Children will have access to a range of active play spaces: the oval, playground equipment, sandpit and asphalt.

The service will work towards having indoor and outdoor spaces available for energetic play, so active play continues to be possible even in inclement weather.

Equipment for Physical Activity and Screen Time:

Children will be offered access to a range of sports equipment: cricket sets, basketballs, handballs, cones, hula hoops and skipping ropes.

The service will play energising music in active play zones to encourage children to dance and create a lively atmosphere.

The service will work towards providing screen time activities that promote social interaction and movement such as Just Dance.

Types of Physical Activity and Screen Time:

Outdoor free play (unstructured, child-initiated activity) is the main physical activity at PHBASC and Vacation Care. It is offered every day.

Educator-led play (where PHBASC educators lead a group of children in an activity, such as a sport or game) may also be offered. When adult-led games are offered, games that maximise children's active participation will be used (eg avoid games that involve long waits for a turn, or games that involve sitting out).

Recreational screen time may include watching a movie. When television is used, educational content will be favoured.

Children will not use mobile phones or personal electronic devices for games/browsing at PHBASC and Vacation Care.

Educator Role Modelling for Physical Activity and Screen Time:

Educators will role model positive physical activity and screen time behaviour, including:

- Standing and actively moving around when supervising outdoor free play.
- Encouraging and positively reinforcing children's physical activity.
- At times, joining in with games.

Education for Physical Activity and Screen Time:

Physical activity is incorporated into educational programs and activities, supporting children's learning, development, and wellbeing.

Healthy physical activity and screen time are reinforced through displays and our Program.

Families and educators are provided with healthy physical activity and screen time information through team training, newsletters, family handbooks our website and Facebook page.

Legislation and National Quality Standard:

National Legislation:

Creating and following this policy supports us to meet the following components of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Version No0.13):

- Part 6 Operating an Education and Care Services
- Item 167 Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
- Item 168 Offence relating to required programs

National Regulations:

Creating and following this policy supports us to meet the following components of the Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653)

- R.73 Educational program
- R.155 Interactions with children
- R.168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures

National Quality Standard:

This physical activity and screen time policy relates directly to:

- Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

And links to:

- Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
- Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children
- Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

This policy and how it is implemented may be used as supporting evidence for how we are meeting the National Quality Standard for these quality areas during our next quality rating and assessment.

Policy Review:

Management and OSHC educators will regularly review the effectiveness of the physical activity and screen time policy within the service (at least twice per year) by meeting to discuss current physical activity and screen time practices and comparing them to the policy and the OSHC physical activity and screen time guidelines.

Including children in the review process is encouraged, to identify new opportunities and new approaches.

Date of next internal policy review: September 2026

Activated OSHC Accreditation Renewal

Management and OSHC educators will ensure that the service's Activated OSHC accreditation remains current. Renewal is required every 3 years via ActivatedOSHC.org.au.

Date of Activated OSHC accreditation renewal: March 2029

Version	Action	Date
V.1	Original endorsement	11 th March 2026
V.1	Approval by PMC	30 th March 2026