

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

1.9 Social Networks (January 2023)

Policy statement

With the ever-increasing popularity of social networking sites such as Face book, MySpace and Twitter it is important that as a pre-school, we have a clear idea of how such sites may be used by staff and volunteers. Exactly how many sites exist is impossible to say as they are being created all the time, but for the purpose of this document, **any** site where an individual can post comments, photographs, videos, hold web forums and share documents will be applicable to this policy.

These sites may provide excellent ways to enhance communication and support or provide valuable additional resources for parents and carers, but equally careless use of these could lead to serious issues of data protection and confidentiality breaches, compromise the integrity and reputation of the pre-school, affect the privacy of staff and parents, or more importantly, put the children within the setting at risk.

Every individual has the right and opportunity to express and communicate on-line and the pre-school does not wish to discourage an on-line presence, but on a professional level, boundaries need to be in place to ensure the reputation of the setting, its staff and the children is respected.

Procedures for staff and volunteers

- Keep all passwords and login details secret from children, friends, family and colleagues
- Make sure you understand how to secure any websites or social networking services you use.
- Always think carefully before you post and don't post any information (photos, videos, comments etc.) publicly online that you wouldn't want employers, colleagues, or parents to see - just because a profile might be set to "private" it doesn't mean that someone else can't copy or share it without your knowledge.
- Consider if it could bring you, the pre-school or someone else's reputation into disrepute - posting something unsafe, inappropriate, obscene or threatening online could lead to criminal, civil and/or disciplinary action.
- It is strongly recommended not to add parents/carers on any personal social networking accounts - discuss any issues with this (for example any pre-existing relationships) with the Joint Leaders or Manager.
- Keep all personal information (phone numbers, email addresses) private.

- Do not use your own personal devices or personal social networking profiles to contact parents/carers - communication with families should always be professional and via pre-school owned equipment.

Responsibility

Any material presented on line in reference to the pre-school by any employee is the responsibility of the poster. Any member of staff found to be posting remarks or comments that breach confidentiality and or are deemed to be of a detrimental nature to the pre-school or other employees or posting/publishing photographs of the setting, children or staff (unless staff permission has been gained) may face disciplinary action.

We recommend that staff members do not accept/request the families of children currently attending pre-school as 'friends' on social networking sites, if no relationship was established beforehand. If you have an existing friendship with a parent/family, please inform the Manager.

Legal framework

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000