

## SG04 Transilience Social Media Policy – Children and Young People

Transilience believes that it is the duty of all those employed by, working on behalf of, or in conjunction with Transilience to protect and prevent the children and young people with whom they come into contact from becoming the victims of abuse. Transilience also encourages children and young people that they are working with to be respectful of the privacy and vulnerabilities of other children and young people.

Transilience are committed to adhering to good practice guidelines children, and to support young people and their families to understand the difference between professional practice and the practice of potential abusers and be able to differentiate.

**Definition of Social Media for the purpose of this document**

The term ‘social media’ is defined here as any electronic communication that enables people to stay in touch online. This includes all mobile phone and web technology which enables interactive communication and conversations between Transilience representatives and service users. These types of conversations are not limited to written or text type conversations they include (but are not limited to) sharing web based information, images (both static and moving) and gaming (educational or otherwise).

**Purpose of this document policy**

Transilience recognises that children, young people and their families make use of social media and digital technology on a day to day basis and utilise applications to manage their lives. It is also recognised that many young people prefer to be contacted via social media and respond better and in a more timely manner using this method. Transilience is also aware that children and young people share social media information such as photographic media and the memories that they accumulate as a result of participating in Transilience projects. Furthermore, social media is also a cost effective method of advertising and providing up to date information and news and is likely to remain a popular method of communication.

Therefore it is essential to have specific children and young person guidelines that will;

* Protect children and young people who receive services from Transilience via social media and information technology.
* Educate children, young people and their families by example. This incorporates professional and appropriate use of communication via social media and information technology including sharing information about other children and young people.
* Provide Transilience representatives with sound and protective principles with regards to communication via social media and information technology
* Ensure that Transilience operates legally, professionally and in line with its values

*TTVS General Responsibilities and Usage are set out in Policy 35 –* Transilience *Social Media*

For the purpose of this document the term ‘Transilience representatives’ will be used to cover all those employed by, working on behalf of, or in conjunction with Transilience.

**Potential Risks**

Risks associated with interactive technology and children and young people are;

* Exposure to inappropriate content.
* Grooming and abuse by online predators.
* Cyberbullying that could result in a child or young person feeling threatened or physically and/or emotionally injured by other children and young people.
* Privacy risks that could identify and locate a child or young person.
* Privacy risks where an adult and/or predator can pose as a child or young person to another child/young person.

**Appropriate Usage of Social Media for Transilience Representatives**

1. Transilience representatives must never contact children or young people using their personal social media accounts or telephone numbers. This includes personal websites/blogs, social networking accounts, online image storage, online gaming IDs as well as home landline or mobile numbers. Transilience representatives should not accept friend requests or similar if their personal account is found by children, young people or their families. Personal accounts should not be ‘open access’ as this could highlight inappropriate personal information.
2. Transilience social media accounts can only be set-up if they are pertinent to the project and are the best way to communicate with the service users in general.
3. All Transilience technological equipment and social media accounts must be protected either by pins or passwords and any relevant privacy settings should be set.
4. Transilience representatives must remember that all online and text conversations are not merely ‘chat’ they are still written documents, should be treated as such and could be used in a court of law.
5. Transilience representatives must not take photographs or films of children and young people using their personal digital camera equipment. This includes cameras on mobile phones, tablets and laptops. Only take images using Transilience equipment and with signed consent, using Transilience consent forms from the parent/guardian of the children and young people involved.
6. Transilience assessments of children and young people will incorporate parental consent regarding communication via social media.
7. Facebook Group accounts and events and other similar accounts must be CLOSED groups (invitation only) if they include children and young people under the age of 18. Children and young people’s ‘vulnerability’ will be highlighted if Transilience representatives advertise their involvement in projects such as ‘young carers’ or similar.
8. No young person under the age of 13 should be contacted via Facebook, which is the minimum age of use for this service.
9. At least two Transilience representatives (adults) must be part of any WhatsApp, Facebook group chats. Be aware that by adding people to group chats it is possible that their mobile number will be revealed to other members.
10. Transilience representatives should consider that working with children and young people using online social media, texting etc. is a form of lone working. Transilience representatives should risk assess the impact on contacting a child or young person on a one to one basis using social media and information technology. For guidance on lone working refer to Transilience Policy 13 – Lone Working
11. Snapchat (and similar applications) is not an appropriate method of messaging children and young people as messages disappear after a designated amount of time and there is no permanent record of the content. Therefore, the use of Snapchat accounts for Transilience purposes are not authorised.

**Appropriate procedures to ensure children and young people are not a cyber threat to other children and young people.**

Transilience recognises that not embracing the advantages of social media or preventing children and young people from using social media, could hinder them in their development of the use, and their understanding of the advantages and the dangers of information technology. Transilience seeks to educate children, young people and their families about responsible ways to use social media and other uses of information technology.

To help safeguard children and young people regarding social media there is a specific safety agreement within Transilience children and young people assessments pertaining to the social media that Transilience uses to communicate with service users. This agreement should be explained and agreed before the service user is granted access to any Transilience social media. This agreement should be reviewed and amended as social media and information technology develops.

**Policy and Procedure development**

It is the responsibility of all Transilience representatives to be mindful of the developing trends in the use of social media and report any emerging themes. This will enable Transilience to respond in a timely manner and remain up to date in their response as to how children and young people are using information technology.

**Reporting problems**

Transilience representatives who become aware of any issues regarding online and technology safety should follow the usual procedures for reporting child safeguarding concerns. These are outlined in

**Policy 03: Transilience** **Safeguarding Children.**

**References**

This policy is written in conjunction with the following TTVS policies and procedures;

* Policy 03: TTVS Safeguarding Children
* Policy 13: TTVS Lone Working
* Policy 35: TTVS Social Media

The following research and publications have also been utilised in the writing of this document

* Department of Education: Pathways to harm, pathways to protection: a triennial analysis of serious case reviews 2011 to 2014. Final Report 2016
* DCSF; Safer Children in a Digital World, The Report of the Byron Review. 2008
* NSPCC: How Safe are our Children? 2016
* NSPCC: Safeguarding Standards and Guidance. For the Voluntary and Community Sector, 2017
* NSPCC: Self –assessment tool resource, 2016
* Youthworkresource.com; Use of Social Networking and Child Protection, 2016
* Northumberland Safeguarding Board: E-Safety – Social Media Guidance for people who work with Children and Young People, 2014

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