



Social Contact Outside of the Workplace Policy:

Here at Ducklings Childcare, we understand that staff may have genuine friendships with parents of pupils outside of the workplace and could be involved in social contact with them independent from a professional relationship. However, it is important that staff are aware that professionals who seek to sexually harm or 'groom' a child may aim to create contact outside of the setting with the child or with the parents of the child in order to create opportunities. Grooming can also be associated with purposes such as exploitation of a sexual nature but also for radicalisation. Staff must recognise that social contact outside of the workplace with children or their parents can be perceived as harmful and may bring the setting into disrepute. In the interest of complete openness, the following steps should be used by staff to minimise any perception of intending harmful behaviour:

- Inform senior management of a relationship with a parent which extends beyond a standard professional relationship;
- Always approve social contact outside of the workplace with senior management;
- Advise senior management of regular social contact outside of the workplace;
- Agree with senior management prior to sending personal communication outside of the workplace; and
- Advise senior management if you are concerned that a child may be becoming infatuated with you.

If a child or parent tries to establish contact further than that of a professional nature, or if this happens coincidentally, staff should exercise their own professional judgement cautiously. This can apply to contact made through external interests or even through the staff member's own family. As part of their role, some staff may be required to support a parent/carer. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member or asks for further help outside of the workplace, senior management should be informed of this and where necessary, referrals made to the appropriate support agency.