



Serving young people and the community

Patron: The Duke of Richmond and Gordon

Social Media Networking Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure safeguarding procedures are adhered to.
- Ensure that colleagues are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites and any impacts in relation to their employment
 - Ensure that colleagues are aware of the risks associated with the inappropriate use of social networking sites and how this may impact on their employment
- Safeguard staff at the setting in connection with the use of social networking sites and minimise the risk that they make themselves vulnerable to allegations
- Ensure the setting maintains its duty to safeguard children, the reputation of the setting and those who work for it. This policy is to cover all individuals within the setting in a paid or voluntary capacity including parent helpers, committee members, those on work experience/college placements and agency staff. Third parties working in partnership with the setting are also expected to adhere to this guidance. This policy applies to social networking sites, web pages, and internet presence which make available personal information (including images) and opinions to the general public including but not limited to Facebook, Pinterest, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, MSN, X formally known as Twitter, YouTube, Blogs, Wikis, Forums, Bulletin boards, Chatrooms, Multi-player online gaming, Viral worlds and instant messenger. This policy will be part of the induction process for all new staff at the setting and will be regularly shared with all existing members of staff. The setting does not discourage colleagues at the setting from using social networking sites, however, all staff should be aware that management will take seriously any occasions where the services are used inappropriately. Staff at the setting shall:
 - Comply with all setting policies and procedures
 - Behave safely, responsibly, and professionally at all times in connection with social networking sites.
 - Co-operate with management in ensuring the implementation of this policy.
 - Not access social networking sites for personal use via the settings equipment.
 - Work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way and avoid any conduct which could lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
 - Report any concerns that any colleague(s) is/are not acting in accordance with this policy to the designated safeguarding officer for the setting.

- Act in accordance with the settings Safeguarding, Whistleblowing and Mobile phone and camera policy
- Understand their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour Staff at the setting must not:
 - use internet or web-based communication channels to send any personal messages to families attending the setting. Personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and makes staff at the setting vulnerable to allegations.
 - place/post any material or links to material of a compromising nature (that is, any material a person might find obscene or offensive, such as sexually explicit or unlawfully discriminating, including inappropriate photographs or indecent remarks or material relating to illegal activity) on any social network space.
 - write about their work on social media websites. Under no circumstances should children, staff parents or carers be discussed, and staff members must not disclose any information that is confidential to the setting or disclose any personal data or information about staff or children and their families which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act.
 - post or share photographs of the children or parents under any circumstance on a personal social media account.
 - make what could reasonably be perceived as abusive/defamatory/undermining/derogatory/critical remarks about the setting or post anything that misrepresents or could bring the setting into disrepute.
 - disclose any information regarding their employment.
 - link their own personal sites to the setting site or use the setting logo on their personal pages.
 - use internet/ online networks to seek information on any child or family linked to the setting.
 - use social media sites to seek to influence others regarding their own political or religious views or to recruit them to an organisation of this kind. We expect all former staff to continue to be mindful of good children's safeguarding practice and of the setting's reputation in using social networking sites. Staff at the setting are strongly advised
 - not to be friends online with family members of children who attend the setting. Where a member of staff is considering not following this advice, they are required to discuss this matter and the implications with the designated safeguarding officer of the setting.
 - in their own interests, to take steps to ensure that their on-line personal data is not accessible to anybody who they do not want to have permission to access it. For example, they are advised to check the security and privacy settings of any social networking site they subscribe to and set these to maximum. For further information see the safer internet website <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/> For instances where the setting uses a social media account/page to communicate with parents, carers and the wider community, high levels of security settings must always be in place. We have safeguarding arrangements in place with regard to images taken of children, which is linked to our safeguarding, camera and mobile phone policy. When posting on social media, there will always be at least two named people responsible for regularly monitoring these sites to ensure appropriate content. For the protection of children, we will follow the guidelines below;

- If an image of a child is used, we will not name the child
- If a child's name is used (initials only) we will not use an image
- Images of children will be stored as set out in our mobile phone and camera policy. If a member of staff has difficulty complying with this policy (for example if they are related to a child or family that access the setting) they should declare this relationship to the designated safeguarding officer for the setting. In the event that this policy is not followed or if any instances of inappropriate use of social networking are brought to the attention of the setting, these may be investigated under the settings disciplinary procedure and depending on the seriousness of the matter, disciplinary action may be taken which may result in dismissal. A serious breach of policy may be regarded as gross misconduct, leading to dismissal. Instances of on-line bullying and harassment will be regarded as a serious matter and will be dealt with under the settings Disciplinary Policy. Any member of staff who is being bullied or harassed on-line or is subject to inappropriate messages or false allegations should report this to the safeguarding designated officer for the setting. Parents and third parties involved in the setting are encouraged to:
 - Raise any concern where it is believed a member of staff within the setting is not acting in accordance with this policy with the designated safeguarding officer. Where any allegations are made that an individual has:
 - Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicated he or she would pose a risk of harm to children The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be contacted via the procedure outlined within WSCC Safeguarding Procedure for Early Years and Play Providers.

Relevant policies and guidance:

Guidance for safer working practice 2022

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2023

WSCC Safeguarding Procedure for Childcare and Play Providers

Disciplinary procedure

Equality policy

ICT policy

Whistleblowing policy

Legislation:

Criminal Justice Act 1988

Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the police and justice Act 2006

Defamation Act 1996

Human Rights Act 1998

Data Protection Act 2018

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Equality Act 2010

Policy Date: 4 December 2024

Review Date: December 2025

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. D.', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.