

13. Social Media Policy

Social networking and social media are powerful communication tools which can have a significant impact on organisational and professional reputations. Bluebells Pre-school have developed a policy to help clarify how best to use these tools to the professional benefit of the company, its staff, parents and children. Examples of social networking websites are blogging, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Wikis etc.

Both in professional and childcare roles, employees need to follow the same behavioural standards online as they would in real life. The same laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with staff, students, trustees and parents applies online as in the real world.

Scope: The scope of this policy is limited to Bluebells Pre-school staff, students and volunteers. This policy also applies to people external to the Pre-school posting material to social networking sites with links to staff professional expectations.

Legal and policy basis: Information posted to social networking sites must adhere to the legislation in force at the time. Particular attention must be paid to the following:

Copyright and Related Rights Acts 2000, 2004 and 2007 Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 The child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 and 2004 Defamation Act 2009 Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 Child Protection / safeguarding Confidentiality Electronic Communication Equality and Diversity Grievance Sickness and Absence Staff and Employment Staff Standards Suitable Persons Volunteer Whistle Blowing

Policy:

Social networking on the company computers must not be used for any commercial or significant personal use.

Pre-school staff shall not:

- Post information which is confidential and proprietary to the Pre-school
- Post material that could be deemed to be threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous, or hostile towards any individual or entity.
- Post phone numbers or email addresses of any member of the Pre-school without their express permission.
- Infringe on the rights of the Pre-school or any entity, including privacy, intellectual property or publication rights
- Post chain letters, the same comment multiple times or otherwise distribute "spam"
- Allow any other individual or entity to use their identity for posting or viewing comments
- Post comments under multiple names or using another person's name
- Post digital media (audio, video, photography) without securing the written permission of the original copyright holder should copyright exist.
- Talk to parents, staff or any other individual about their child, the children, staff and parents of the Pre-school on social networking sites
- Talk negatively about the Pre-school on social networking sites

Any breach of this policy could result in disciplinary action

Best Practice Guidelines:

Staff posting material to social networking sites shall adhere to the following best practice guidelines:

Think twice before posting - Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both on the poster and the company. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you wouldn't say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online.

Strive for accuracy - Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. This is especially important if posting on behalf of the Pre-school in any capacity.

Be respectful - Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the person posting the message and / or on the company

Remember your audience - Be aware that a presence in the social media world is , or easily can be, made available to the public at large. This includes prospective customers, current students, current parents and colleagues, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.

On personal sites, identify your views as your own. Staff will not post that they work for Bluebells Preschool for safeguarding.

Photography - Photographs posted on social media sites easily can be appropriated by visitors. Always consider your professional image in photographs and you may not include photos of colleagues without their permission.

Signed:

Stacey Humphrey (PreSchool Manager)

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