

## SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

### 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, or may not be used both by the setting as a whole and the individuals who work at the Pre-school. Exactly how many sites exist is impossible to say as they are being created all the time and 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 Pre-School affecting the privacy of staff and parents, or more importantly, put the children within the setting at risk.

### Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all staff, committee members, students and volunteers. Staff are in a professional position and are responsible for the care and education of children and must not engage in any activities which may bring Pre-School or its employees into disrepute. Staff are asked to sign an annual declaration at their appraisal to enforce this policy.

Parents are also advised regarding this policy, but as Pre-school Practitioners we are unable to monitor and control parental usage and can only act upon any information that comes to our attention which is deemed to be detrimental.

### Use of social networking sites

Every employee and parent has the right and opportunity to express and communicate on-line and 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 Pre-school, its staff and the children is respected.

### Procedures

When using sites staff must:

- In no way refer to the Pre-school, other staff members and children by name
- Not include any images/videos of themselves or other staff members which may be perceived as inappropriate behaviour for a childcare professional
- Not contain any images of the children or their families

- Ensure that personal comments are not made about other staff, children, parents and other professional associated with Pre-School
- Take personal responsibility for reading and adhering to the terms of service for each site and comply with the law in regard to copyright and plagiarism. Other relevant laws include those referring to libel and deformation of character (if you don't have anything good to say, don't say anything at all)

When using sites parents and carers must:

- In no way refer to the Pre-School, other staff members and children by name
- Not contain any images of the children or their families without their consent
- Ensure that personal comments are not made about staff, children or other parents

## **Responsibility**

Any material presented on line in reference to 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 in line with the Pre-school disciplinary procedures.

**Usage for staff and impact on work:**

- This must be restricted to outside of working hours/days off
- Mobile phones with internet access are not permitted to be used during working hours
- Social networking activities must not at any time interfere with a staff member's pre-school responsibilities

**Email:**

The use of email to other staff members is intended for purposes of communication relevant to the responsibilities assigned to each employee. Social networking sites are not deemed a requirement for these purposes.

**We recommend that staff members do not accept/request the following as 'friends' on such sites:**

- Families of children currently attending Pre-school if no relationship was established beforehand

If you have an existing friendship with a parent/family please inform the Pre-school Leader and Supervisor.

**Remember:**

- No information sent over the web is totally secure and as such if you do not wish the information to be made public refrain from sending it over a social network site.
- Even though you may think you are anonymous or use an alias you may be recognised.
- Maintain professionalism, honesty, and respect at all times.