

2.6. Social networking and online safety



Policy statement

We take steps to ensure that there are effective procedures in place to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from the unacceptable use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) equipment or exposure to inappropriate materials in the setting.

The intention of this policy is to ensure that all staff has a clear understanding of their responsibility to the Nursery when using Social Networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc...) It is important when using social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter that staff maintains confidentiality and ensures proper practice at all times. This is to protect the children, parents & families of the setting along with the staff. It is also to guard the nursery reputation and the staff's own personal reputation.

Procedures

- Our Nursery Manager is responsible for co-ordinating action taken to protect children is:

Information Communication Technology (ICT) equipment

- Only ICT equipment belonging to the setting is used by staff and children.
- The designated person is responsible for ensuring all ICT equipment is safe and fit for purpose.
- All computers have virus protection installed.
- The designated person ensures that safety settings are set to ensure that inappropriate material cannot be accessed.

Internet access

- Children do not normally have access to the internet and never have unsupervised access.
- If staff access the internet with children this is for the purposes of promoting their learning, only.
- The nursery manager has overall responsibility for ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded and risk assessments in relation to online safety are completed.
 - Children are taught the following stay safe principles in an age appropriate way prior to using the internet:
 - only go online with a grown up
 - be kind online
 - keep information about me safely
 - only press buttons on the internet to things I understand
 - tell a grown up if something makes me unhappy on the internet
 - Staff will also seek to build children's resilience in relation to issues they may face in the online world, and will address issues such as staying safe, having appropriate friendships, asking for help if unsure, not keeping secrets as part of social and emotional development in age appropriate ways.
 - If a second-hand computer is purchased or donated to the setting, the nursery manager will ensure that no inappropriate material is stored on it before children use it.
 - All computers for use by children are located in an area clearly visible to staff.
 - Children are not allowed to access social networking sites.
 - Staff report any suspicious or offensive material, including material which may incite racism, bullying or discrimination to the Internet Watch Foundation at www.iwf.org.uk.
 - Suspensions that an adult is attempting to make inappropriate contact with a child on-line is reported to the National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre at www.ceop.police.uk.

- The nursery manager ensures staff have access to age-appropriate resources to enable them to assist children to use the internet safely.
- If staff become aware that a child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they discuss this with their parents and refer them to sources of help, such as the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or www.nspcc.org.uk, or Childline on 0800 1111 or www.childline.org.uk.

Email

- Children are not permitted to use email in the setting. Parents and staff are not normally permitted to use setting equipment to access personal emails.
- Staff do not access personal or work email whilst supervising children.
- Staff send personal information by encrypted email and share information securely at all times.

Mobile phones – children

- Children do not bring mobile phones or other ICT devices with them to the setting. If a child is found to have a mobile phone or ICT device with them, this is removed and stored in the office until the parent collects them at the end of the session.

Mobile phones – staff and visitors

- This applies to all parties in the nursery, including staff, parents, contractors, children, and all other parties, and applies to fixed line and mobile phones – where this includes the use of personal mobile phones.
 - The use of personal mobile phones is prohibited on the premises during working hours, other than in the designated times and mobile phone areas. Mobile phones will be stored securely in the office/staff room/other designated area which is not used by children.
 - The designated mobile phone areas (which are purposefully located away from the children) are:
 - Entrance to the nursery – specifically in the space from the front gate up-to the wooden gate near the office, but not beyond this.
 - The nursery office.
 - Outside the nursery premises.
 - Allocated room during period not accessed by children.
 - Any nursery phone use should be limited to emergency or business use only.
 - In an emergency, personal mobile phones may be used in an area where there are no children present, with permission from the manager.
 - Our staff and volunteers ensure that the setting telephone number is known to family and other people who may need to contact them in an emergency.
 - Parents and visitors are requested not to use their mobile phones whilst on the premises. Parents and visitors will be advised of the designated mobile phone areas, where they can use their mobile phone and no children are present.
 - These rules also apply to the use of work-issued mobiles, and when visiting or supporting staff in other settings.
 - No recording (visual / auditory) or transmission of any nursery activity or child will take place. Such activity will be regarded as gross misconduct.
 - Breach of this policy will result in performance management action being applied, disciplinary actions or dismissal.

Cameras and videos

- Our staff must not bring their personal cameras or video recording equipment into the setting.

- Photographs and recordings of children are only taken for valid reasons i.e. to record their learning and development, or for displays within the setting, with written permission received by parents (see the Registration form). Such use is monitored by the manager.
- Where parents request permission to photograph or record their own children at special events, general permission is gained from all parents for their children to be included. Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children.
- If photographs of children are used for publicity purposes, parental consent must be given and safeguarding risks minimised, for example, ensuring children cannot be identified by name or through being photographed in a sweatshirt with the name of their setting on it.
- The purpose and context for any proposed image should always be considered. It must be determined whether taking a photograph or video, for example, will be the most effective option or whether alternative methods of capturing information are to be judged more appropriate in the given circumstance.
- Sensitivity must be shown to any child or young person who is to appear uncomfortable; and the potential for misinterpretation is to be recognised. Images will therefore not be taken of any child or young person against their wishes or who appear uncomfortable.
- Coercion must not be used to encourage a child or young person to participate when it has been indicated that they do not want to be involved. A child or young person's right not to be photographed is to be respected.
- The taking or making of images of a children in a one to one situation with an adult is to be avoided whenever possible; unless there is an agreed, specified reason for doing so. It is to be recognised that this may leave both the adult and child in a vulnerable position and is therefore not to be considered accepted practice
- Permission must be obtained from all parents and carers for images to be taken. If any parent or carer has indicated that their child is not to have a photograph taken no images are to be created.
- All images to be taken should represent the diversity of the children and young people who attend the early years setting. No child is to be favoured in photographs.
- Images which could be considered in any way to cause distress, upset or embarrassment must not be used.
- Images of children and young people must only be taken when they are in full and suitable dress. In no circumstances, are images to be taken of children or young people in any state of undress. Should children and young people be participating in sport activities, careful consideration must be given to the appropriateness of taking such images, in particular the angle of which shots may be taken.
- The taking or making of images in sensitive areas, for example, toilet cubicles and changing areas are not permitted.
- It should be ensured that a child name or any other identifying information does not appear in any image, caption or accompanying text alongside their or within their photograph, for example on displays, documentation panels and name cards. Particular care is to be taken where such images are likely to be viewed by others external to the setting, including the general public.
- It must be understood that the need to obtain consent for the use of images, is to be applied to adults as well as children.
- Where a third party provides such photographs/images, they must confirm in writing that they have the express consent of the parent or carer to use the said image, where applicable.
- No webcams are to be used.

Social media

- Staff are advised to manage their personal security settings to ensure that their information is only available to people they choose to share information with.
- Staff should not accept service users, children and parents as friends due to it being a breach of expected professional conduct.
- Staff observe confidentiality and refrain from discussing any issues relating to work.
- Staff must not mention any of the children from the nursery on their online profiles.
- Staff must not write direct or indirect suggestive comments about work on their online profiles.
- Staff must not publish photos of the children on their online profiles.
- Staff must not publish photos of other staff while in the nursery on their online profiles.
- Staff must not write anything about other staff members on their online profiles.
- Staff must not use mobile phones to take photos in the nursery or to access social networking sites during their working hours.
- Staff must not mention any of the companies that Tiddley Tots Nursery works with on their online profile.
- In order to maintain professional boundaries staff should not accept personal invitations to be friends from parents of the nursery unless they know them in a personal capacity.
- Staff members are advised to set their online profiles to private so that only friends are able to see their information.
- Staffs are responsible for adhering to the terms of service of each site they use.
- Personal profiles should not contain any images or videos which may be perceived as inappropriate behaviour for a childcare professional.
- Staff will not have the nursery name anywhere in their personal profile.
- Any breaches of the Facebook & social networking policy could result in disciplinary action.
- Staff should report any concerns or breaches to the designated person in their setting.
- Staff avoid personal communication, including on social networking sites, with the children and parents with whom they act in a professional capacity. If a practitioner and family are friendly prior to the child coming into the setting, this information is shared with the manager prior to a child attending and a risk assessment and agreement in relation to boundaries is agreed.

Electronic learning journals for recording children's progress

- Managers seek permission from the senior management team prior to using any online learning journal. A risk assessment is completed with details on how the learning journal is managed to ensure children are safeguarded.
- Staff adhere to the guidance provided with the system at all times.

Use and/or distribution of inappropriate images

- Staff are aware that it is an offence to distribute indecent images. In the event of a concern that a colleague or other person is behaving inappropriately, the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy, in relation to allegations against staff and/or responding to suspicions of abuse, is followed
- Staff are aware that grooming children and young people online is an offence in its own right and concerns about a colleague's or others' behaviour are reported (as above).

The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to a specific site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy. Where no policy or guideline exists, employees should use their professional judgment and take the most prudent action possible. Consult with your manager or supervisor if you are uncertain.