

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Information and records

Providers must ensure that all staff understand the need to protect the privacy of the children in their care as well as the legal requirements that exist to ensure that information relating to the child is handled in a way that ensures confidentiality.

5.2 Use of personal websites, weblogs and social networking sites

Policy statement

The pre-school recognises that many employees and members of the committee use the internet for personal purposes and that many employees and members of the committee participate in social networking on websites such as Facebook, Myspace etc. In addition, employees and members of the committee may set up personal weblogs of 'blogs' on the internet.

Whilst employees and members of the committee are free to use the internet in this way, they must ensure that they do not breach the law or disclose pre-school confidential information, defame the pre-school or any party associated with it, or disclose personal data or information about any individual that could reach the Data Protection Act 1998.

Procedures

Websites and weblogs

The pre-school does not encourage employees or members of the committee to write about their work in any way and would prefer them not to do so. If individuals choose to do so then they should follow the rules below. Employees or members of the committee who have a weblog or website should not disclose the name of the pre-school on it or allow it to be identified by any details at all. This includes posting photographs of pre-school premises or events with work colleagues.

The following guidelines apply:

- Employees and members of the committee must not disclose any information that is confidential to the pre-school or to any third party that has disclosed information to the pre-school. The pre-school confidentiality policies provide guidance about what constitutes confidential information.
- If employees or members of the committee choose to write about their work, even without identifying the precise charity name, it may still be possible for people to work out the employer's identity. Individuals should always be conscious of their duty as employees and members of the committee to act in good faith and in the best interests of the pre-school under English law. This is a very strong legal obligation.
- The pre-school will not tolerate criticisms in weblogs. Even where they are true and not defamatory, they will amount to a breach of employee duties and could lead to action under the pre-school's disciplinary policy.

- Employees and members of the committee should not link their site to the pre-school's website.
- Employees and members of the committee must not use the pre-school website or e-mail addresses for their weblog.
- Employees and members of the committee must not have any hyperlinks to the pre-school website.

Social networking sites

The pre-school respects employees or members of the committee's right to a private life. However, the pre-school must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. It therefore requires employees using social networking websites to:

- Refrain from identifying themselves as working for the pre-school.
- Ensure that they do not conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the pre-school.
- Take care not to allow their interaction on these websites to damage working relationships between members of staff, committee and clients of the pre-school.

Important considerations

When writing a weblog and placing information on social networking sites employees and members of the committee should be careful not to:

- Include material that breaches copyright and should link to other material rather than cutting and pasting it.
- Defame anyone; an employee or member of the committee who makes a defamatory statement that is published on the internet may be legally liable for any damage to the reputation of the individual concerned
- Include personal information about an individual without his/her consent, otherwise they risk breaching the Data Protection Act 1998, which is a criminal offence.
- Include material that is abusive, defamatory, sexist, racist or that could be interpreted as harassment or bullying.
- Bring the pre-school into disrepute.

Cyber bullying

The pre-school is committed to ensuring that all of its staff are treated with dignity and respect at work. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in the work place. Cyber bullying methods could include text messages, mobile phone calls, instant messenger services, by circulating photos or video clips or by posting comments on web sites, blogs or in chat rooms. Personal blogs that refer to colleagues without their consent is also unacceptable. Employees who cyber bully a colleague could also face criminal prosecution under various laws, including the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

Security and identity theft

Employees and members of the committee should be aware that social networking websites are a public forum, particularly if the employee is part of a 'network'. Employees should not assume that their entries on any website will remain private.

Employees and members of the committee must also be security conscious and should take steps to protect themselves from identity theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information that they give out. Social networking websites allow people to post detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and favourite football team, which can form the basis of security questions and passwords.

This policy was adopted by

TOLLESHUNT D'ARCY PRE-SCHOOL

On

OCTOBER 2018

Date to be reviewed

OCTOBER 2019

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory

SARAH SKILLING

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

CHAIR PERSON