

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

The safeguarding policy and procedures must include an explanation of the action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, and cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting.

1.6 Use of Social Media & Mobile Digital Devices Policy

Policy statement

We provide an environment in which children/parents and staff are safe from images being recorded and inappropriately used. The objectives of this policy are to:

- Prevent and avoid damage to the reputation of the Nursery caused by irresponsible or unauthorised use of Social Media.
- Remind the Nursery community (including employees and parent/carers) of their personal responsibilities both in and out of Nursery when using social media.
- Avoid misuse of Mobile Digital Devices caused by inappropriate use of a mobile device around children.

Definition of Social Media

“Social media” is the broad term given to describe the latest evolution of internet and web based communication platforms, which enable users to rapidly connect and interact in a variety of different formats. A social media site is a platform that allows user-generated content to emerge through interactions and collaborations in a virtual community. This contrasts with earlier websites and other forms of broadcast media where users are limited to the passive viewing of content.

Definition of Mobile Digital Device

A mobile digital device is defined as, but not limited to, a camera, a mobile phone, tablet or laptop computer, personal music player/recorder or a PDA. These devices may be able to record video, audio, capture photographs or take notes and may be connected to the internet so they can upload or download content.

This policy is linked to the Safeguarding children and child protection policy.

Procedures

Personal mobile phones

- The Nursery allows staff to bring in personal mobile phones and devices for their own use during non-working hours, however at the beginning of each individual's shift, personal mobile phones are stored in the office or cupboard and remain there during all contact time with children.
- Under no circumstances does the Nursery allow a member of staff to contact a current pupil or parent/carer using their personal device, during contracted hours.
- In the event of an emergency, personal mobile phones may be stored in the office and used in privacy, where there are no children present, with permission from the Lead Practitioner.

- Our staff and volunteers ensure that the Nursery telephone number is known to immediate family and other people who need to contact them in an emergency.
- If a staff member has a personal emergency they are free to use the setting's phone or make a personal call in a private area with no children present.
- If our members of staff or volunteers take their own mobile phones on outings, for use in the case of an emergency, they must not make or receive personal calls as this will distract them.
- Our staff and volunteers will not use their personal mobile phones for taking photographs of children on outings.
- Parents and visitors are requested not to use their mobile phones whilst on the premises. We make an exception if a visitor's company or organisation operates a lone working policy that requires contact with their office periodically throughout the day. Visitors will be advised of a quiet space where they can use their mobile phone, where there are no children present.
- Users bringing personal devices into the Nursery must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal material on the device.
- It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and report any concerns with regards to mobile phone use to the Nursery manager/Leader.
- Concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately (see allegations against a member of staff policy)
- The manager/Leader reserves the right to check the image contents of a member of staff's mobile phone should there be any cause for concern over the appropriate use of it.
- Should inappropriate material be found then our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted immediately. We will follow the guidance of the LADO as to the appropriate measures for the staff member's dismissal.

Digital Devices

- Our staff and volunteers must not bring their own cameras or video recorders 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 whilst children are present.
- Photographs or recordings of children are only taken on equipment belonging to the setting.
 - The Nursery own 5 tablets for use by the staff and children within the Nursery setting or on trips.
 - These tablets are used to take photographs of the children to upload to our Online Learning Journey system as evidence of the child's learning and development.
 - Children only use these tablets for accessing factual information from the internet under adult supervision.
 - Parents are given secure access to review these Learning Journeys.
- Images taken on any digital device must be deemed suitable without putting the child/children in any compromising positions that could embarrass or distress.
- All staff are responsible for the location of the camera and tablets, these should be placed within the cabinet at the end of the day, and the cabinet then locked.

- Images taken and stored on the camera must be downloaded as soon as possible, ideally once a week. They are then deleted from the camera.
- Images must only be downloaded by the Nursery Administrator or Deputy Lead Practitioner.
- Under no circumstances must cameras of any kind be taken into the bathrooms without prior consultation with the manager/leader.
- If photographs need to be taken in the bathroom i.e. photographs of children washing their hands, then the manager/leader must be asked first and staff supervised whilst carrying out the activity. At all times the camera must be placed in a prominent place where it can be seen.
- Tablet, Camera and video use is monitored by our Lead Practitioner.
- Where parents request permission to photograph or record their own children at special events, permission will first be gained from all parents for their children to be included.
- Photographs and recordings of children are only taken of children if parents provide written permission to do so (found on the individual child's Registration Form).
- Events such as outings and Christmas events may be recorded by video and photographs by staff and parent/carers but always in full view of all attending. Parents must not post photographs or video containing other children on social media websites.
- Failure to adhere to the contents of this policy will lead to disciplinary procedures being followed.

The use of social networking

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This document gives clarity to the way in which social media are to be used by the Ashridge Nursery community.

Staff

It is likely that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Staff must comply with the following guidelines:

- Staff must never add Nursery children as friends into their personal accounts.
- Staff will need to exercise professional judgement in determining whether adult friends who also happen to be/become parents/carers of children at the Nursery as virtual "friends".
- Staff must not post pictures of Nursery events containing photos of Nursery Children.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff must not post negative comments about the Nursery, children, parents or colleagues.
- Staff should make the Manager aware in the first instance or the LADO of any inappropriate comments or breaches of policy as soon as possible.

Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents/carers might choose to use social media as a helpful tool in supporting each other. As such it is important that any parent who has taken the initiative to organise such groups makes it clear that the group is not an official Nursery group and completely separate from the Nursery itself.

The Nursery would like to request that any such group administrators apply the following best practice:

- They have responsibility for ensuring that members comply with the expectations laid out in this policy.
- The group rules should align with this policy.

The general responsibilities of parents/carers in using social media, whether posting in closed groups or openly, include:

- Pictures/videos/etc. of Nursery children other than their own child/children must not be posted on social networking sites.
- Concerns/complaints must be sent through official Nursery communication channels rather than posted on social networking sites.
- Malicious or fictitious comments about any member of the Nursery community must not be posted on social networking sites.

Parents/carers are expected to act responsibly at all times, remembering that social media platforms should be regarded as insecure, open, broadcast platforms and that UK libel, defamation, etc. laws apply.