



Hopton school house Playgroup and OOSC policies

1.14 Social networking policy

(social media)

Policy Statement

At Hopton school house, we recognise that social networking and social media platforms can be valuable tools for communication, marketing, and sharing information. However, inappropriate use of social media can place children, families, staff, and the setting at risk.

This policy aims to ensure that all staff, volunteers, students, committee members, and parents understand their responsibilities when using social networking sites and social media platforms and that children's welfare, privacy, and confidentiality are protected at all times.

Safeguarding children remains our primary concern, and social media use must never compromise children's safety or wellbeing.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Safeguard children and families.
- Protect the privacy and confidentiality of children, parents, and staff.
- Promote professional conduct online.
- Prevent inappropriate communication between staff and families.
- Protect the reputation of the setting.
- Ensure compliance with safeguarding and data protection legislation.

Legal Framework

This policy is based on the following legislation and guidance:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)



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- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Students
- Apprentices
- Committee members and trustees
- Agency staff
- Parents and carers
- Visitors where appropriate

The policy applies to both professional and personal use of social networking sites.

Definition of Social Media

Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Snapchat
- X (formerly Twitter)
- WhatsApp
- Messenger
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Blogs and forums
- Any future social networking platforms

Professional Conduct

All staff are expected to:



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- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Behave online in a manner consistent with their role.
- Protect the reputation of the setting.
- Act in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities.
- Remember that online content can remain accessible indefinitely.

Staff must always consider whether their online behaviour could undermine public confidence in their suitability to work with children.

Communication with Parents and Carers

Staff must not:

- Accept friend requests from current parents through personal accounts.
- Send friend requests to parents.
- Communicate with parents through personal social media accounts.
- Discuss children or setting matters through personal messaging services.

If staff have long term friendships on social media with new parents, they must make this known to the manager and ensure any communication regarding children or the setting must take place through approved setting communication systems.

Confidentiality

Confidential information must never be shared on social media.

This includes:

- Children's names.
- Children's photographs.
- Personal information about families.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Staff information.
- Internal setting matters.
- Complaints or investigations.

Confidentiality obligations continue even after employment ends.

Photographs and Videos

Staff must never:



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- Upload photographs or videos of children to personal social media accounts.
- Share images taken within the setting.
- Tag children or families online.
- Use personal devices to capture images of children.

Only authorised setting devices may be used in accordance with parental consent procedures and the setting's Photography and Recording Policy.

Use of Official Setting Social Media Accounts

Official social media accounts may be used to: (with the approval of the manager)

- Promote the setting.
- Share general information.
- Celebrate activities and achievements.
- Communicate with the wider community.

The setting will ensure:

- Appropriate parental consent is obtained.
- Content is suitable and professional.
- Children's privacy is protected.
- Posts are approved by authorised staff.

No personal or confidential information will be published.

Personal Use of Social Media by Staff

Staff may use social media in their personal time provided that they:

- Do not identify confidential information.
- Do not discuss children, families, or colleagues.
- Do not post offensive, discriminatory, or inappropriate content.
- Do not bring the setting into disrepute.
- Maintain professional standards expected of those working with children.

Staff should be aware that publicly accessible content may be viewed by parents, colleagues, Ofsted, or other professionals.(as part of our safer recruitment policy)

Online Conduct and Respect



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The setting expects all users of social media to:

- Treat others respectfully.
- Avoid abusive, offensive, or discriminatory comments.
- Refrain from bullying, harassment, or intimidation.
- Use appropriate language at all times.

Any online behaviour that may affect children's welfare or the reputation of the setting may be investigated.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are asked to:

- Respect the privacy of all children and families.
- Avoid posting photographs containing other children without permission.
- Refrain from publishing negative or defamatory comments about staff, children, or the setting.
- Raise concerns directly with the Manager through the appropriate complaint's procedure.

Parents should be aware that publishing information online may compromise the privacy and safety of children and families.

Monitoring and Investigation

The setting reserves the right to investigate concerns relating to social media use where:

- Safeguarding concerns arise.
- Confidentiality has been breached.
- Professional standards may have been compromised.
- The setting's reputation may have been damaged.

Appropriate action will be taken in line with disciplinary procedures where necessary.

Safeguarding Concerns

Any social media activity that raises concerns about:

- Child protection.
- Child exploitation.



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- Grooming.
- Harassment.
- Domestic abuse.
- Online abuse.

must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where necessary, referrals may be made to Children's Social Care, the Police, or other relevant agencies.

Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this policy may result in:

- Informal guidance.
- Formal disciplinary action.
- Referral to professional bodies.
- Referral to safeguarding agencies.
- Dismissal in cases of serious misconduct.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- E-Safety and Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Photography and Recording Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy