

Social Media and External Messaging Platforms Policy

Updated: 17th February 2026

Contents

Intention.....	2
Legislative context	2
Legal guidelines and frameworks	2
Legal duties.....	2
Definition of terms used in this policy	2
Guiding principles	2
Roles and responsibilities	3
Updates to this policy.....	3
Social media expectations for parents/carers.....	3
Personal social media expectations for staff	4
Maintaining professional boundaries between parents/carers and staff members	4
Expectations for staff when maintaining professional boundaries with parents/carers.....	5
Expectations for parents/carers when maintaining professional boundaries with staff.....	5
Expectations for staff and parents/carers with pre-existing online friendships.....	5
Response to boundary-crossing communications or social media use	6
What to do when online content raises safeguarding concerns	6
Company use of social media.....	6
Using external messaging platforms for internal work-related communication	6
Rules for using WhatsApp for internal work-related communication	6
Accountability for group chats.....	7
Professional requirements when using WhatsApp.....	7
Expectations for staff members no longer employed by the nursery	7
Essential knowledge for staff from this policy	7
Training requirements.....	8
Monitoring and review	8

Intention

This policy is designed to protect the privacy and safety of children, staff, families and visitors and protect the nursery's reputation. It aims to prevent the unauthorised sharing of personal information, maintain professional boundaries, and preserve confidentiality. The policy encourages responsible communication and clarifies expectations for both staff and parents/carers regarding their online behaviour when related to the nursery.

Legislative context

Legal guidelines and frameworks

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2025 (EYFS)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2025
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025 (KCSiE)
- Data Protection Act, 2018
- The ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, 2015

Legal duties

The nursery complies with data protection legislation to safeguard personal data. While private social media use is not directly regulated, any online activity that raises concerns about staff suitability or a child's safety will be addressed in line with safeguarding requirements.

Definition of terms used in this policy

Social media

Social media refers to online platforms and websites that allow users to create, share, or exchange content, including text, images, videos, and other media. Examples include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), TikTok, Snapchat, LinkedIn and YouTube. Social media can also include forums, blogs, and other online spaces where public or private interactions and content sharing take place.

External messaging platforms

These are platforms that are not controlled or regulated by the workplace, where communication is typically personal and outside the nursery's oversight. While they may be used for work-related purposes, such use is strictly regulated to maintain confidentiality, professionalism, and the security of nursery information.

Internal communication platforms

These are platforms that are provided, managed, and regulated by the workplace for professional communication. Examples include work email, Microsoft Teams, and Family.

Guiding principles

Social media use must reflect professionalism, integrity and respect. Confidentiality, safeguarding and the nursery's reputation must be protected at all times.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain professional conduct at all times when using social media or external messaging platforms, whether on behalf of the nursery or in a personal capacity that may be linked to their role• Protect confidential information relating to children, families, colleagues, and the organisation• Do not post, share, or comment on content that could identify children, families or staff members without prior authorised consent• Use only approved communication channels when contacting parents/carers or colleagues regarding work-related discussions• Ensure all online communication is respectful, accurate, and aligned with the nursery's values• Report any concerns, breaches, or inappropriate online activity to management immediately• Follow safeguarding, confidentiality, and data protection policies at all times
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversee the nursery's social media and messaging platforms, ensuring all content is appropriate, accurate, and compliant with safeguarding and data protection requirements• Provide staff with guidance and training on acceptable online conduct• Ensure parental consent is obtained and recorded before sharing images, videos, or identifiable information• Investigate reported breaches promptly and take appropriate action for misconduct or misuse
Parents/carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage respectfully with the nursery's social media platforms and external communication channels• Inform the nursery of any concerns regarding online content or communication involving their child

Updates to this policy

This policy may be unilaterally updated at any time with immediate effect to ensure clarity, reflect the nursery's current operational practices, and maintain compliance with the latest government legislation and guidance. Please refer to the 'More Information' section on the website.

Social media expectations for parents/carers

In addition to the responsibilities highlighted above, parents/carers are expected to follow the following rules regarding social media in matters relating to or potentially impacting the nursery:

- Do not share images, videos, or information about other children without explicit permission from their parents/carers

- Do not screenshot or share any Family posts from the nursery without express permission from the management team
- Refrain from posting negative, defamatory, or confidential information relating to the nursery, children, families, or staff
- Use official communication channels to raise concerns rather than social media platforms

Personal social media expectations for staff

This section refers to staff members' use of social media in their personal lives, rather than in an official capacity representing the nursery. These policy points are in place to ensure personal social media activity does not conflict with professional responsibilities or compromise the nursery's reputation and values. Staff members should consider before posting:

1. Does this post create any perception that I may be unsuitable to work with children?
2. Could this post interfere with my ability to perform my professional responsibilities?
3. Does this post undermine the nursery's reputation or values?

Any actions that could affect a staff member's ability to perform their role, damage professional relationships, or negatively impact the business will be addressed through the nursery's disciplinary procedures and may result in dismissal. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Posting any content that could negatively impact the reputation of the nursery setting or would be a breach of safeguarding protocols
- Posting confidential or proprietary information about the nursery. This includes, but is not limited to, financial information, trade secrets, business strategies, customer data, and internal communications
- Criticising or disparaging the nursery, management, staff, or families in ways that could identify individuals within the nursery or damage professional trust
- Sharing false or misleading information about the nursery or its activities
- Posting content that contradicts the values, mission, or goals of the nursery
- Content that could be considered hate speech, offensive or intimidating to any particular group
- Posting explicit or sexual content
- Posting images containing substance abuse or excessive alcohol consumption
- Posting offensive or inappropriate images (e.g., violent content, explicit language)
- Using the nursery's name or logo, including images wearing the nursery uniform, without managerial permission
- Expressing personal opinions that could be interpreted as official statements from the nursery
- Engaging in arguments, disputes, or public disagreements, especially when involving the nursery, staff, or families

Maintaining professional boundaries between parents/carers and staff members

The nursery is committed to maintaining clear and professional boundaries between staff and families. Positive relationships are essential to supporting children's wellbeing and development; however, these relationships must remain professional at all times to avoid conflicts of interest, perceptions of favouritism, or blurred boundaries.

Expectations for staff when maintaining professional boundaries with parents/carers

Staff are expected to follow the below rules when using social media or external messaging platforms¹:

- Staff must not send friend requests, follow requests, or connection invitations to parents/carers from personal social media accounts
- Staff must not use personal phone numbers, messaging apps, or private accounts to communicate with parents/carers about nursery matters unless explicitly authorised by management for a specific purpose. All other communication must take place through approved nursery channels
- Staff must not accept friend or follow requests from parents/carers on personal accounts (unless the connection clearly falls under the pre-existing relationship exceptions)
- Staff must not comment on, react to, or share parents'/carers' personal posts in a way that could blur professional boundaries or compromise impartiality

Expectations for parents/carers when maintaining professional boundaries with staff

To ensure that professional relationships are maintained, parents/carers are asked to follow the following rules with regards to using social media or external communications to contact staff:

- Parents/carers must not send friend requests, follow requests, or connection invitations to nursery staff via personal social media accounts
- Parents/carers must not attempt to contact staff privately through social media regarding nursery matters
- Parents/carers should not tag, mention, or publicly reference staff in personal posts relating to nursery matters without prior consent
- Parents/carers must respect staff working hours and avoid contacting staff privately outside of appropriate channels
- Parents/carers must not place pressure on staff or create expectations of preferential treatment

Expectations for staff and parents/carers with pre-existing online friendships

Where a genuine pre-existing online friendship existed prior to employment or before the child's enrolment, the connection may continue. In such cases, staff must:

- Maintain strict professionalism in all nursery-related matters
- Avoid discussing nursery business through personal channels
- Declare the relationship to management to ensure transparency
- Ensure the relationship does not influence professional judgement or create perceived bias

¹ Please note, if staff and parents/carers have a pre-existing friendship different rules may apply as detailed within the following [section of this policy](#).

Response to boundary-crossing communications or social media use

Failure to adhere to the expectations may result in action in line with nursery policies and procedures. This may include:

- Informal reminders of policy
- Formal meetings to address boundary concerns
- Escalation under staff disciplinary or parent/carer conduct procedures where appropriate
-

All attempts to initiate inappropriate or boundary-crossing communication either by staff or parents/carers must be reported to management immediately so appropriate actions can be taken.

What to do when online content raises safeguarding concerns

Any inappropriate or concerning content related to individuals attending the setting², such as images or messages that could indicate neglect, abuse, or harm, should be reported to the nursery Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) following the guidance outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

For more information regarding external reporting, please see the Technology and E-safety Policy.

Company use of social media

The nursery does not use social media as a platform for internal communication with staff, engaging with parents/carers or members of the nursery community, distributing information about day-to-day nursery activities or digital marketing purposes. Instead, the nurseries social media accounts are used solely for sharing basic provisional information for prospective parents/carers.

Using external messaging platforms for internal work-related communication

WhatsApp is the only approved external messaging platform for staff to use for work-related communication with each other. This decision is based on several key factors:

- WhatsApp uses end-to-end encryption, ensuring that messages are securely transmitted and cannot be intercepted or accessed by unauthorised parties
- By limiting messaging to WhatsApp, we eliminate the need for staff to manage multiple platforms for work-related chats. This simplifies communication and reduces the risk of missed or overlooked communications
- WhatsApp is a widely recognised platform that meets industry standards for data protection and privacy. Its security features align with our commitment to safeguarding both personal data and sensitive information

Rules for using WhatsApp for internal work-related communication

² This includes content related to or posted by families, staff members, children or individuals known to the setting.

Accountability for group chats

All work-related group chats must have a designated owner who is a senior member of staff responsible for managing and overseeing the group. The owner must ensure the chat remains focused on its intended purpose and is accountable for its content and membership. This includes promptly removing any staff who leave the company to maintain confidentiality and security. The owner is also responsible for monitoring conversations to ensure all communication remains professional and appropriate³.

Professional requirements when using WhatsApp

When using WhatsApp for nursery-related communication, staff members must:

- Never share any personally identifiable information about children, families, or staff members in group chats or individual messages
- Ensure group chats include only relevant and authorised staff members
- Communicate professionally at all times, avoiding offensive language, gossip, or personal criticism
- Respect work-life boundaries and avoid sending work-related messages outside working hours unless in exceptional circumstances⁴
- Ensure any personal device used for nursery communication is password protected to maintain security

Expectations for staff members no longer employed by the nursery

All staff, including those who have left the nursery, must adhere to the expectations outlined within this policy and continue to uphold confidentiality, professionalism, and the nursery's reputation. Former employees must immediately exit all work-related WhatsApp groups and delete any work-related messages, images, or documents from personal devices. If information is needed for an ongoing legal matter, this must be approved in writing by management and used only for that purpose. Any failure to comply may result in legal action, involvement of authorities, or withholding of final payments.

Essential knowledge for staff from this policy

Key learning	Level
Explain the nursery's expectations on staff with regards to social media use, including confidentiality, information sharing and personal social media posts	L1
Explain what the nursery's approved communication channels are for staff when contacting each other or parents/carers regarding workplace issues	L1
Explain how staff are expected to maintain professional boundaries with parents/carers	L1

³ For guidance on how to complete these processes, please see the further reading section of this policy.

⁴ Staff should only send after-hours messages if they are urgent and directly work-related; if the matter does not meet these criteria, it should be held until normal working hours.

Key learning	Level
Explain the nursery's expectations for staff and parents/carers who have a pre-existing friendship established prior to their working relationship	L1
Explain how WhatsApp may be used by staff to discuss work, including the rules regarding accountability and ex-employees	L1
Explain the expectations for staff members no longer employed by the nursery	L1
Explain the social media expectations for parents/carers	L2
Explain the restrictions surrounding the companies use of social media	L2

Training requirements

There is no additional mandatory training modules required to accompany this policy.

Monitoring and review

Confirm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm that all WhatsApp groups created for work purposes have an approved senior staff member allocated as the groups owner who is able to monitor the groups content • Confirm that all ex-employees have been removed from WhatsApp groups • Confirm the nursery's social media account contains the approved information only
----------------	--