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## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### 1. Policy statement

This policy is intended to help employees make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as but not limited to blogs, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn.

This policy outlines the standards we require employees to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which we will monitor your use of social media and the action we will take in respect of breaches of this policy.

### 2. Who is covered by the policy?

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, consultants, contractors and trainees (collectively referred to as employees or staff in this policy).

### 5. Using social media sites in our name

Only staff with permission from the Director are permitted to post material on a social media website in our name and on our behalf. Any breach of this restriction will amount to gross misconduct.

### 6. Using work-related social media

We recognise the importance of the internet in shaping public thinking about our company and our services, employees, partners and customers. We also recognise the importance of our employees joining in and helping shape industry conversation and direction through interaction in social media. You are therefore permitted to interact on social media websites about industry developments and regulatory issues on social media websites such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn. This list may be updated as necessary. Before using work-related social media you must have sought and gained prior approval to do so from your line manager.

### 7. Personal use of social media sites

The use of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter is a part of daily life and are frequently used as much by children and young people attending our childcare settings as by adults. Employees who make use of such sites should observe these guidelines.

Staff and contractors should not conduct or portray themselves in social media in a manner that may

- Bring the Organisation into disrepute
- Lead to valid parental complaints

- Be deemed as derogatory towards the Organisation or its customers
- Be derogatory towards children and/or parents and carers
- Bring into question their appropriateness to work with children and young people

Any communication between children/parents and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of text messages, digital cameras, video, web-cams, websites and blogs. Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. In summary this means that staff

- Should not share any personal information online with a child in our care
- Should not form on-line “friendships” or enter into communication with children in our care using social media
- Should never use or access social networking sites of children in our care
- Staff should not give their personal contact details to children in our care, including mobile numbers
- Not use the internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to children in our care

### **8. Rules for use of social media**

Whenever you are permitted to use social media using the company’s name in accordance with this policy, you must adhere to the following general rules:

- Always write in the first person, identify who you are and what your role is, and use the following disclaimer “The views expressed are my own and don’t reflect the views of my employer”.
- Do not upload, post, forward or post a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.
- Any member of staff who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media website should inform the appropriate manager
- Never disclose commercially sensitive, anti-competitive, private or confidential information.
- Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent.
- Before you include a link to a third party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website permit you to link to it. All links must be done so that it is clear to the user that they have moved to the third party's website.
- When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.
- Do not post, upload, forward or post a link to chain mail, junk mail, cartoons, jokes or gossip.
- Be honest and open, but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people’s perceptions of us as a company. If you make a mistake in a contribution, be prompt in admitting and correcting it.
- You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media tools – be aware that what you publish will be public for many years.
- Don't escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations. Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry or upset, return to it later when you can contribute in a calm and rational manner.
- Don’t discuss colleagues, competitors, customers or suppliers without their prior approval.
- Always consider others’ privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory eg politics and religion.

- Avoid publishing your contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them, and never publish anyone else's contact details.
- Activity on social media websites during office hours should complement and/or support your role and should be used in moderation.
- If you notice any content posted on social media about us (whether complementary or critical) please report it to the relevant manager.

### **9. Monitoring use of social media websites**

- Employees should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- We reserve the right to restrict or prevent access to certain social media websites if we consider personal use to be excessive. Monitoring is only carried out to the extent permitted or as required by law and as necessary and justifiable for business purposes.
- Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and us. It may also cause embarrassment to us and to our clients.
- In particular uploading, posting forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, will amount to gross misconduct (this list is not exhaustive):
  - (a) pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);
  - (b) a false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation;
  - (c) material which is offensive, obscene, criminal discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to us, our clients or our employees;
  - (d) confidential information about us or any of our employees or clients (which you do not have express authority to disseminate);
  - (e) any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for you or us);
  - (f) material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.
- Any such action will be addressed under the Disciplinary Procedure and is likely to result in summary dismissal.
- Where evidence of misuse is found we may undertake a more detailed investigation in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure, involving the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the investigation. If necessary such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.
- If you notice any use of social media by other members of employees in breach of this policy please report it to the Director.