

Social network and blog policy

1. Introduction

First Steps Childcare (Cambs) Limited recognises that some employees may use the Internet for personal purposes and may participate in social networking on sites such as Facebook and MySpace. Employees must ensure they do not breach the law or disclose any confidential information about the setting, children or families.

This policy outlines the setting's approach to social networking and the use of blogs. It details the ground rules for employees, who should ensure that the content of their blogs/social networking sites does not bring the setting into disrepute or breach their obligations under the setting's Code of Conduct.

This policy applies to all setting employees, volunteers and students.

2. Definitions

The term 'blog' is short for 'web log'. A blog is an online diary detailing personal insights and experiences. This is shared with an online audience.

A social network site is a website, which allows individuals to construct a public or semi-public online profile and to connect with others who share similar interests and views.

3. Ground rules for employees

Employees must not access personal blogs/social networking sites on work premises or use the setting's internet systems or email address for their own use, without prior agreement or in accordance with the setting's policy.

The setting does not condone employees writing about their work on social networking sites or web pages. If employees choose to do so, they are expected to follow the rules below.

Staff must not:

- disclose any information that is confidential to the setting or any third party or disclose personal data or information about any individual child, colleague or service user, which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act.
- disclose the name of the setting or allow it to be identified by any details at all. This includes posting photos of children and young people, the premises or events with work colleagues.
- link their own blogs/personal web pages to the setting's website.
- make defamatory remarks about the setting, colleagues or service users.
- misrepresent the setting by posting false or inaccurate statements.

Communication with children and young people, by whatever method, should always take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Staff should avoid any misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour that could be construed as grooming.

Staff should not:

- give their personal email details to children, young people and parents who use the setting.
- send social networking site 'friend requests' to, or accept them from, children, young people or parents who use the setting.

Failure to adhere to the rules and guidelines in this policy may be considered misconduct and could lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations.

Remember that anything posted online could end up in the public domain to be read by children, parents or even future employers – so be careful what you post and who you post it to. For example, posting explicit pictures of yourself could damage your reputation and that of your profession and organisation. Parents and employers may also question your suitability to care for children.

4. Adoption and annual review of the policy

This policy was adopted at a meeting of: _____ First Steps Childcare (Cambs) Limited _____

held on: _____ 12.08.15 _____

Signed on behalf of the
Management :

Sarah Vick

This policy was
reviewed on:

This policy was
reviewed on:

This policy was
reviewed on:

Useful contacts

Early Years Safeguarding Advice Line

01223 729040

Ofsted

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