

## **ICT, Mobile Phone and Social Media Policy**

**Policy statement** - Pickering Pre-school Playgroup provides the use of tablets and laptops for the use of staff in the setting to document the progress of children through online learn journal (Tapestry as of September 2020) as well as for administrative purposes. Laptop / computers are also used to give children a basic introduction to computing. We take steps to ensure that there is an effective procedure in place to protect children from the unacceptable use of computers, tablets and mobile phones in the Preschool. We recognise that the use of a fixed computer platform will fade-out in time in favour of portable and smaller devices. Any tablet, laptop or other type of computing equipment will be used in a professional, lawful and ethical manner by members of staff and that age appropriate software be used with children. Uses of ICT equipment that are deemed unacceptable are as follows: using, transmitting, or seeking inappropriate, offensive, pornographic, vulgar, suggestive, obscene, abusive, harassing, threatening, racist, sexist or defamatory language or materials. Any misuse of this nature by members of staff, volunteers, students or Trustees / Committee members will lead to disciplinary proceedings against them. Anything deemed to be unacceptable and believed to be illegal by law will be referred to the police.

We take steps to ensure that there are effective procedures in place to protect children from the unacceptable use of tablets, mobile phones, cameras and other equipment capable of making photographs, video or other images in the Pre-School setting. We believe that our Staff should be completely attentive during their hours of working, to ensure that children receive good quality care and education. Personal mobile phones should not be used during working hours except in the case of an emergency. For this purpose only, staff members personal mobile phones may be left switched on, but must remain in the kitchen at all times.

**Health and Safety** - We recognise the health risk to young children from using computers. Where used on tables we will ensure that equipment is the correct size for the children; the work area is at the correct height and that the screen is positioned to reduce glare from light sources. We also position the equipment away from hazards such as sand and water. Computer use should be limited to short periods of time per child and the child is closely supervised by a member of staff at all times.

### **Procedures**

#### *General ICT*

- 👉 Children will only use age appropriate software in the setting.
- 👉 Any portable ICT equipment will not be taken into the toilet area.
- 👉 Copyright of materials is to be respected.

#### *Personal Mobile Phones*

- 👉 Personal mobile phones belonging to members of staff are only used during breaks.
- 👉 At the beginning of each individual's shift, personal mobile phones are stored in the kitchen, no children are allowed to enter.
- 👉 In the event of an emergency, personal mobile phones may be used in the privacy of the kitchen with permission from the Preschool Leader.
- 👉 Members of staff ensure that the telephone number of the Preschool is known to immediate family and other people who need to contact them in an emergency.
- 👉 If members of staff 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.
- 👉 Members of staff will not use their personal mobile phones for taking photographs of children.
- 👉 Parents and visitors are requested not to use their mobile phones whilst on the premises. There is 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.
- 👉 All individuals who are to bring personal devices into Preschool must ensure that they hold no inappropriate or illegal content.

#### **Parent/Carer Mobile Phones**

- 👉 Children will not be passed over to parents at the end of their session whilst a parent is seen to be using their mobile phone, until they have finished and their attention is secure.

#### **Cameras and videos**

- 👉 Members of staff must not bring their own cameras or video recorders into the Preschool.
- 👉 Photographs and recordings of children are only taken for valid reasons, i.e. to record their learning and development, or for displays within the Preschool.
- 👉 Photographs or recordings of children are only taken on equipment belonging to the Preschool.
- 👉 Camera and video use is monitored by the Preschool Leader
- 👉 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 there is written permission to do so (found on the individual child's registration form)

#### **Aim**

The aim of the ICT / Mobile Phone Policy is to protect children from harm, by ensuring the appropriate management and use of this equipment by all individuals who are to come into contact with the Preschool. This is to be achieved through balancing protection and potential misuse. It is therefore to be recognised that alongside the potential risks, mobile phones continue to be effective communication tools. This in turn is to contribute to safeguarding practice and protection.

It is to be recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that will give the most cause for concern; and which should be considered the most susceptible to potential misuse. Examples of misuse are to include the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. It must be understood that should mobile phones be misused, there will be a negative impact on an individual's safety, dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not to be considered exclusive to children, so the needs and vulnerabilities of all must be respected and protected.

**Code of conduct** - It is to be ensured that all members of staff will:

- 👉 be aware of the need to protect children from harm.
- 👉 have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- 👉 know how to minimise risk.
- 👉 be vigilant and alert to potential warning signs of misuse.
- 👉 avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to potential allegations.

- ↗ understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
- ↗ be responsible for the self-moderation of their own behaviour.
- ↗ be aware of the importance of reporting concerns immediately.

## **Pre-school mobile**

The use of a designated Pre-school mobile is to be promoted as it is considered to be an effective communication tool, enabling text, email messages and calls to be made and received. It is also an essential part of the emergency toolkit which is to be taken on short trips and outings. Effective security procedures are to be put in place to safeguard against any potential misuse. Only authorised individuals are to have access to the Preschool mobile, which is to be stored securely when not in use. All use is to be recorded and monitored by the Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding. Personal calls are not to be made on the Preschool mobile phone, other than in circumstances to be agreed. Personal contact will be permitted to be made via the Preschool mobile in the event of an emergency. The Preschool mobile phone is to be clearly identifiable as such.

## **Emergency contact**

It is to be recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others, and will often provide necessary reassurances due to their ease of access, particularly at difficult times. Agreed acceptable use of mobile phones is to therefore be promoted. This is to afford staff peace of mind, by reducing stress and worry and is therefore to allow them to concentrate more fully on their work. Such use must be subject to management, monitoring and review.

## **Social Media policy**

We recognise that social media, professional networking and personal websites can be useful technologies and do not wish to discourage the use of this. Above all else, everyone needs to use good judgement in the materials that make it online. This policy aims to set guidelines that we should all have regard to when using social networking sites.

This Policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies:

- ↗ Social networking (Facebook, Instagram, Myspace, Snapchat, TikTok)
- ↗ Blogs
- ↗ Discussion forums
- ↗ Collaborative online spaces
- ↗ Media Sharing services ( YouTube)
- ↗ Micro Blogging (twitter)

## **Responsibility**

Any material presented on line in reference to Pickering Preschool Playgroup by any persons connected to the preschool is the responsibility of the poster. Any parent, committee member, employee or volunteer found to be posting remarks or comments that breach confidentiality and/or are deemed to be of a detrimental nature to the preschool, staff, committee members, children or parents may face disciplinary action in line with the Preschool's disciplinary procedures. (Students will be asked to leave immediately)

As part as our duty to safeguard children it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families. We therefore require that:

- ↗ No photos taken within the setting or at preschool special events with the children are to be posted for public viewing. (This excludes those photos taken by staff for the children's developmental folders, which are sometimes used to display in the setting, for use of Pickering Preschool Playgroup website and in other advertising material if parental permission is given.)
- ↗ No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites that regard Pickering Preschool Playgroup, children, staff or and business relating to the setting or committee business (Except appropriate use for marketing funding raising events) or that could be construed to have any impact on the Preschool reputation or that would offend any members of staff or parent using the Preschool.

In order to ensure professional boundaries childcare staff, students or volunteers should not accept personal invitations to be 'friends' on such media sites from parents, carers or children that use the Preschool unless they know them in a personal capacity. Any comments deemed to be inappropriate is to be reported to the Preschool Leader, deputy or the chair and any action will be at their discretion. The Preschool has its own Facebook page, however, this is only for information relating to opening times, holiday dates, sudden closures due to extreme weather, trip information, committee meetings, promotion of what we do, home-schooling suggestions and advertising of fundraising events only. All employees are strictly prohibited from using any social networking sites whilst on Preschool premises and during working hours. As information placed on these sites is in the public domain, any comment which suggests that an employee is breaking the terms of their contract will be treated as a disciplinary offence. We will view any form of cyber-bullying in a very serious light and malicious comments made about employees will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

If any of the above points are found to be happening then the member of staff involved will face disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal. All the above points are also applicable to any parent helper, student or visitor on the Preschool premises during the session time.

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of Pickering Pre-School Playgroup held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.**

**Date to be reviewed – Before end of August 2024.**

**Signed on behalf of the management committee**

**Name of signatory – Richard Allenby (Chairperson).**