

## **General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare**

Children's behaviour must be managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs.

## **Safeguarding children**

### **1.12.3 Social Media**

#### **Policy statement for St Joseph's Pre-school**

The Social Media policy applies to:

- all staff members employed by St Joseph's Preschool – both paid and voluntary, and relates to content posted using either a St Joseph's Pre-school device and a personal device; and
- all parents/carers/relatives of children who attend St Joseph's Preschool.

St Joseph's Pre-school realises that social media, professional network sites, rapid-fire communications, blog sites and personal websites are all useful technologies. Every individual has the opportunity to express and communicate online in many ways, and we do not wish to discourage online presence. However, we need to impose certain restrictions on an employee and Committee member as to their profile content in relation to the pre-school, the passing of certain work related information and the need to comply with the Law with regard to copyright, plagiarism and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

The boundaries between the offline and online world are easily blurred; this can have potentially serious consequences for professionals. It is noted that publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain.

This policy sets out guidelines on how social media should be used to support the delivery and promotion of St Joseph's Pre-school, and the use of social media by staff and Committee members in both a professional and personal capacity. Together with asking our parents/carers to be careful with what they post in relation to the Pre-school/staff/Committee. It sets out what you need to be aware of when interacting in these spaces and is designed to help staff/Committee support and expand our official social media channels, while protecting the Pre-school and its reputation and preventing any legal issues.

It should also be noted that St Joseph's Pre-school does not tolerate online harassment, including sexual harassment, during working hours or when using own personal devices (out of hours). Such actions could lead to disciplinary procedures, including dismissal due to gross misconduct.

The policy includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Facebook
- Personal blogs
- X (formerly Twitter)
- Instagram
- Personal web sites

- Snapchat

We would urge all users of social media ensure that they think carefully before deciding whether to post or share content which is:

- harmful - as defined by the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#), ie. “anything online which causes a person distress or harm”;
- inconsistent with St Joseph’s Pre-school’s charitable purpose;
- not in the Pre-school’s best interest;
- in breach of the law.

### Disclaimer

Under guidance from the Charity Commission, please note that St Joseph’s Pre-school does not have an expectation that the Committee will monitor personal social media accounts. However, should they become aware of content posted or shared by an individual being associated with and having a negative impact on the setting, then the Committee will consider what action to take to protect the Pre-school and its reputation.

It is noted that the Lead Practitioner and a Deputy Practitioner, regularly monitor social media channels for mention of St Joseph’s Pre-school

### Point of contact for social media

The Pre-school’s Lead Practitioner, Natalie Finn-Powers, is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, speak to the Lead Practitioner. The Pre-school’s Deputy Practitioner also has “admin” access to the setting’s two Facebook accounts. No other staff member can post content on St Joseph’s Pre-school’s official channels without the permission of the Lead Practitioner or, in her absence, one of her Deputies. This includes any posts by the Treasurer who is classified as a “group member”.

### Procedures

- Never use St Joseph’s Pre-school’s logos or Charity registered number or Ofsted URN unless approved to do so.
- St Joseph’s Pre-school holds **you** the employee/parent/carer of children individually responsible for reading, knowing and complying with any Social Media Terms of Service documents of the sites you use.
- Employees of the Pre-school must not list St Joseph’s Pre-school on any social media site.
- Employees must not identify themselves and employees of St Joseph’s Pre-school. A social networker becomes, to some extent, a representative of their workplace, and everything he/she posts has the potential to reflect on the group and its image. If a connection to the Pre-school has already been revealed by an employee, posts should contain disclaimers that make it clear that opinions expressed are solely those of the authors and do not represent the views of the group.
- Employees of St Joseph’s Pre-school **must NOT** identify themselves as working with children – this can lead to being a specific target of unscrupulous members of the web in order to gain access to children for paedophile purposes.

- All information regarding anything to do with the Pre-school is not to be discussed or referred to on any such sites, even in private messaging with restricted access between site members.
- There must not be any disclosures of personal information with regards to other members of the Pre-school staff, children using the Pre-school, parents and/or carers or Committee members.
- Employees must not refer to children or their parents in any way. This includes coded references of people or incidents surrounding them. These can easily be worked out or misinterpreted with disastrous results. St Joseph's Pre-school's relationship with parents is considered to be an important one and valuable asset that can be irrevocably damaged through thoughtless comment.
- If you are concerned about something you see on social media, such as comments posted by a parent/carer, make sure you report it to the setting's Designated Safeguarding Lead, **Natalie Finn-Powers**. If you are concerned about content posted by a colleague, then refer to the setting's Safeguarding policy<sup>1</sup> "managing allegations" section.
- No other Facebook groups or pages, X accounts<sup>2</sup> or any other social media channels should be set up on behalf of St Joseph's Pre-school. This could confuse messaging and awareness of the Pre-school.
- The privacy settings of any social media platform used by the setting are regularly reviewed.
- Two-factor authentication is used wherever possible and practicable.

### Appropriate conduct

- Staff are expected to hold St Joseph's Pre-school's position of neutrality.
- Staff and or Committee members should ensure they reflect St Joseph's Pre-school's values in what they post and in the tone of voice used;
- Make sure that all social media content has a purpose and a benefit for St Joseph's Pre-School, and accurately reflects St Joseph's Pre-school's agreed position.
- Take care with the presentation of content. Make sure that there are no typos, misspellings or grammatical errors. Also check the quality of images.
- Always pause and think before posting. Remembering that what is published is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. However, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
- Always check facts. Do not automatically assume that material is accurate. Reasonable steps should be taken where necessary to seek verification, eg. by checking data/statistics and being wary of photo manipulation.
- Be honest. Say what you know to be true or have a good source for. If you have made a mistake, do not be afraid to admit it.
- Staff/Committee members should refrain from offering personal opinions via St Joseph's Pre-school's social media accounts, either directly by commenting or indirectly by 'liking', 'sharing' or 'retweeting'. If you are in doubt about St Joseph's Pre-school's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Committee Chairperson.
- Do not break the law to supply material for social media, such as using unauthorised video footage. All relevant rights for usage must be obtained before publishing material.

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<sup>1</sup> Policy 1.2 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

<sup>2</sup> Formerly known as Twitter

- If a complaint is made on St Joseph's Pre-school's social media channels, staff should seek advice from one of the Committee Officers, ie Chairperson, Treasurer or Secretary.
- St Joseph's Pre-school is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. We have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, but we cannot tell people how to vote.

### **Personal media appropriate conduct**

- Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive St Joseph's Pre-school. You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of St Joseph's Pre-school. If you are using your personal social media accounts to promote and talk about St Joseph's Pre-school's work, you must use a disclaimer such as: "*The views expressed on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent St Joseph's Pre-school's positions, policies or opinions.*"
- Staff or Committee members who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at or are associated with St Joseph's Pre-school should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and/or Committee Chairperson. Similarly, staff or Committee members who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for/are associated with St Joseph's Pre-school should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and/or the Committee Chairperson.
- Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with St Joseph's Pre-school and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself.
- Always protect yourself and the charity. Be careful with your privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information<sup>3</sup>.
- Think about your reputation as well as the St Joseph's Pre-school's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Don't insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite and the first to correct your own mistakes.

### **Friendship/Tagging**

- The Pre-school's employees must not have as or request parents of children currently attending the group or their known family members to be network friends. In this social setting it is easy to cross the line by inadvertently discussing the child even with the parent's permission. All pre-school staff must comply with the GDPR 2018 and DPA 2018 in and out of work time.
- Staff members must not equally accept friendship requests from parents or their family members. Polite refusal is perhaps embarrassing initially but carefully chosen words stating that it is the Pre-school's policy (without naming the group) that disallows it. Remember it is other people too who can see posts.

### **Photographs**

Photographs, digital images including those on the internet (images), are protected by copyright<sup>4</sup>. Images taken when the Pre-school is operational belong to St Joseph's Pre-

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<sup>3</sup> See 1.11.1 Acceptable Use of Technology

<sup>4</sup> Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

school, they own the copyright. Permission to use these images outside of the Pre-school will need to be obtained. This can be done by emailing the Committee Chairperson<sup>5</sup>.

- St Joseph's Pre-school employees must never share or post photographs that show any child from the group in any form, even with parental consent. This is strictly not allowed even if the picture format has no connection to the Pre-school, ie. taken in a social aspect.
- The Use of Mobile Phones, Digital Photography and Other Electronic Devices policies<sup>6</sup> and procedure gives additional parameters for the taking of pictures.
- Staff are encouraged to speak with their friends and family about their online reputation, ie. digital reputation; it is important that they understand what photos of staff can/cannot be posted on social media.

### **Defamatory statements**

- Defamatory statements can lead to Lawsuits against the author of the statement and can be at the very least bring bad publicity to St Joseph's Pre-school.

### **Disciplinary action**

- If this policy is not adhered to, disciplinary procedures will be followed (refer to the disciplinary policy and procedure).

### **St Joseph's Pre-school Facebook page**

The Pre-school has two Facebook accounts. Below confirms the setting's objectives for holding two accounts.

1. An open<sup>7</sup> Facebook page which is used to advertise the Pre-school. No information on what is happening day-to-day is included nor are photographs of the children uploaded. The video of a tour the setting is available on this page<sup>8</sup>.
  2. A closed<sup>9</sup> Facebook page which is only accessible to practitioners and parents/carers of those children who currently attend the setting. Photographs of the children and information on the day-to-day activities are regularly uploaded.
- "Members" of the closed Facebook page are reviewed each August prior to the start of the new Pre-school year. Thus parents who no longer have a child attending the setting will have access removed.
  - Staff members will be asked to support or edit the Pre-school's Facebook page.
  - Only photographs of children with written permission from parents/carers will be used.
  - The overall administration of the Pre-school's Facebook page lies with the Acting Lead Practitioner. She has responsibility to edit or remove posts that are distasteful.
  - The Acting Lead Practitioner and her Deputy regularly review and moderate content on the Pre-school's two Facebook accounts as necessary. Content is deleted when it is obsolete or unnecessary.
  - Occasionally the "comments" facility is turned off if there is a particular topic the setting need parents/carers to email them about or they do not need a response.

### **St Joseph's Catholic Primary School's Year Facebook pages**

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<sup>5</sup> Email: stjosephspresch@gmail.com

<sup>6</sup> Policy 1.11 Use of Mobile Phones, Digital Photography and Other Electronic Devices

<sup>7</sup> 'Open' in this context means 'open to the public', ie anyone can see the contents and access

<sup>8</sup> Written permissions obtained from parents/carers prior to video being produced.

<sup>9</sup> 'Closed' in this context means a closed members group – invitation only

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has seven closed Facebook accounts, one for each primary year, ie. Reception to Year 6. These are closed Facebook pages. A member of the Committee has permission/access to these. This is used solely for the purposes of advertising Pre-school fundraising events, like the termly cake raffle.

## **IT Security**

St Joseph's Pre-school adheres to the recommendations advocated by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) in their "Cyber Security Training for School Staff". For more information see the setting's Acceptable Use of Technology policy<sup>10</sup>.

## **Support and Advice**

- If you are worried about a child or a colleague you can also contact the following helplines for support and advice:
  - Professionals Online Safety Helpline – Advice and support for professionals working with children with any online safety issues children in their care may face – 0344 381 4772 or [helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk)
  - NSPCC helpline – Advice and support for anyone who is worried about a child or needs information about child protection – 0808 800 5000
- National organisations which provide advice to professionals working with children include:
  - [Childnet](#)
  - [London Grid for Learning](#)
  - NCA-CEOP [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) and [www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre)
  - [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

## **Further Guidance**

- UK Council for Internet Safety, Guidance "Safeguarding Children and Protecting Professionals in Early Years Settings: Online Safety Guidance for Practitioners" (published 4 February 2019)
- National Cyber Security Centre: (a) Social Media – Protecting what you publish guide; (b) Social Media and how to use it safely

## **Legal Framework**

- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

## **Associated Policies and Procedures**

- 1.2 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection
- 1.5 Information sharing
- 1.11 Use of Mobile Phones, Digital Photography and Other Electronic Devices
  - 1.11.1 Acceptable Use of Technology
- 5.4 Data Protection

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<sup>10</sup> Policy 1.11.1 Acceptable Use of Technology



<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Purpose of change</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.0	K Coupe	New policy	Sept 2014
2.0	K Coupe C Ajayi	To comply with GDPR 2018 & DPA 2018, version control and review. Updated following 2 <sup>nd</sup> read by C Ajayi.	7 Nov 2018
3.-	K Coupe	Reviewed. Updated with inclusion of further guidance and where to go for more support and advice	20 November 2021 Committee Member (T Clapp)
4.0	K Coupe and A Shipton	Updated with regards to the use of Facebook by the setting in line with guidance from Early Years Gloucestershire. Clarification of what is meant by “open” or “closed” Facebook page	1 February 2022 Committee Member (A Shipton)
5.0	K Coupe and N Finn-Powers	Updated in line with the Charity Commission’s guidance “Charities and social media”	18 October 2023 Committee Member (S Webb)
6.0	K Coupe	Updated to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflect change in Twitter to X;</li> <li>• changes in personnel;</li> <li>• stipulate that online harassment/sexual harassment during or outside work hours will not be tolerated</li> </ul>	27 November 2024 Committee Member (G Ind)
7.0	K Coupe	Updated to include reference to privacy settings on social media platforms and 2-factor authentication. New section entitled “IT Security” with reference to 1.11.1	9 October 2025 Committee Member (G Ind)