

Developing a 'Social Networking' Procedure

Providers must ensure that all staff understand the need to protect the privacy of the children in their care as well the legal requirements that exist to ensure that information relating to the child is handled in a way that ensures confidentiality – **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2024 point 3.78 CM, 3.79 GP.**

The procedure should include:

- The information and guidance that is issued to employees in relation to social networking, this will be included in the staff contract, staff hand book and will form part of the staff induction
- The implications should any member of staff put their professional role/workplace in disrepute through misuse of social networking, or where there is evidence of cyber bullying
- Staff using social networks are aware of the need to set appropriate privacy settings to ensure only appropriate people are accessing personal information,
- Staff can refer to this publications for practitioners [Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety guidance for practitioners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-guidance-for-practitioners)
- Managers can refer to this publication to support their policies and procedures [Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations for managers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations-for-managers)
- How confidentiality will always be maintained by staff using social network sites
- The importance of not 'inviting' parents and their families as a friend request
- The importance of practitioners understanding the appropriate media materials that can be uploaded onto the network system
- Practitioners awareness of who to refer to should they highlight any potentially illegal materials
- Practitioners awareness of the settings whistle blowing policy should they feel staff are using face book or other social networks inappropriately and wish to raise their concerns, along with OFSTED's whistle blowing contact details – 0300 123 3155. This includes any inappropriate or intrusive images that are found, should this happen the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed – Tel: 01302 737332 LADO@doncaster.gov.uk along with M.A.S.H Tel: 01302 737777
- How professional conduct must be maintained at all times
- The need to ensure practitioners never put themselves in a vulnerable position

- Where a setting has a social networking page i.e. face book page, Is this a closed group? how is this managed and by whom, how are parents invited onto the page and by whom, how once a child has left the setting access to the group is cancelled, the procedures that are in place to monitor the content of the page, how parents' consent is sought should photographs include their children

The procedure should be reviewed:

- At least annually.
- The procedure needs to be signed by the registered person, include reviewed date and next review due date.
- If any of the changes are made to the procedure when reviewed the staff need to be informed.

Links to other policies & procedures:

- Safeguarding Children
- Staffing and Employment
- Supervision and Appraisal
- Induction
- Recording of Information
- Working in Partnership with parents
- Whistle Blowing

This information is provided for guidance only. It is your responsibility to ensure that all statutory legal guidance is adhered to. Consideration needs to be given to any changes in legislation subsequent to the production of this information.