

# ONLINE SAFETY POLICY

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Child Protection

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## The legal framework for this policy is based on:

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England.

## Guidance

- Safeguarding children and protecting professional's in early years settings: Online safety guidance for practitioners (Feb 2019)
- Online abuse learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse
- Bullying learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying
- Child protection learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system

## Purpose

Children should never experience abuse of any kind, this includes harm online. Children should be able to be exposed safely to modern technology devices, which contain links to the internet for education. Children have a right to learning about the world around them and we have a responsibility in helping them understand how to keep themselves safe online.

Ofcom found that 52% of 3-4-year olds go online for an average of nearly 9 hours a week and 45% of 3-4-year olds use YouTube. Whilst children do not have unsupervised access to the internet in our provision, we understand that many children at home do and it is our duty to inform parents to the dangers and ways to practice online safety.

Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children's welfare and in helping children to understand how to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children is paramount when children or adults are using the internet or mobile devices such as tablets.
- Ensure the safety of children, parents, staff and the Company through parents using social media and messaging services to connect.
- Provide staff with the principles and procedures that guide our approach to online safety
- Ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices. This policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children.

## We recognise that:

- The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges
- We have a duty to ensure that all children and adults involved in our nursery are protected from potential harm online
- We have a responsibility to help keep children safe online, whether or not they are using the setting's network and devices
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children's welfare and in helping children to understand how to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

## Social Media, WhatsApp and other messaging services

We recognise that many parents may connect together through online services like social media or WhatsApp chat. There are many risks that come with using these tools, Little Sparrows outlines the following for it's service users to ensure protection and safeguarding is maintained;

- a chat group/ post should never be used to air grievances, concerns or complaints. (Please see our updated Complaints Procedure below)
- Identify children or staff
- Make personal comments about staff, children or other parents

- Discuss incidences between children or staff - including privately messaging other parents (please see Complaints Procedure below)
- Use threatening behaviour
- Bring the Company into disrepute
- Must not breach confidentiality or disclose personal data or information about any individual that could break the General Data Protection Regulation, 2018

### Exposure of the internet in Little Sparrows

Children do not have direct, unsupervised access to the internet however, staff do use online resources which could pose a risk:

- Spotify music to download songs and create playlists
- Online videos for learning purposes
- Ipods to take pictures and use the Family app platform to share them.

### Risks at home

- Parents/Carers oversharing information that could identify a child, their location or the nursery they attend
- Radicalisation – risk of exposure to extremism
- Neglect & abuse – parents spending too much time online or not safeguarding them from harm
- Lack of supervision in what children are being exposed to in the home and not teaching their child how to stay safe

### How can early years practitioners support families?

Practitioners should suggest the following strategies to help safeguard children at home during online use:

- Not overusing the internet and being good role models themselves
- Young children should always be supervised closely online
- Check apps, websites and search results before using them with children.
- Role model safe behaviour and privacy awareness - Talk to children about safe use, for example ask permission before taking a child's picture even if parental consent has been given.
- Ensure safety modes and filters are applied - default settings tend not to ensure a high level of privacy or security. But remember parents still need to supervise children closely.
- Check privacy settings to make sure personal data is not being shared inadvertently or inappropriately.

For more information and practical advice, access the Childnet [‘Educators pack for online safety awareness’](#)

## RESPONSIBILITIES

We will seek to keep children safe by:

### Management will:

- Appoint an online safety coordinator – Rachel Traczyk
- Provide clear and specific directions to staff, students and volunteers on how to be responsible with electronic devices that have access to the internet.
- Ensure personal information about the children is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- Examine and risk assess any new technologies before they are used within the nursery.
- Maintain robust GDPR procedures and gaining consent from employees and parents / carers regarding to use of the family app
- Provide supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety

### Management and staff must:

- Understand the risks (Content, Contact, Conduct) from the Guidance: Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings.
- Know what the risks are and what strategies you can share with families in the nursery
- Support and give guidance to parents/carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- Make use of home visits to inform your understanding of how technology is used within the home and the context of the child with regards to technology.
- Have conversations and help children to understand the dangers of online devices and how to keep themselves safe at nursery and at home.
- Understand the importance of ensuring that user names, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively
- Ensure that images of children, young people and families are decent and are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given

**If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:**

- Follow our safeguarding procedures for abuse
- Making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account
- Reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

**What should I do if I have a concern?**

- If you are worried about a child for any reason, you must follow our setting's child protection policy and report concerns immediately to the DSL so that the correct steps are taken from the start.
- If you are concerned about the behaviour of a colleague online, follow your allegations procedures and report and record to your DSL or your manager. If you are unhappy with the response you receive, follow your settings whistleblowing policy. You can also contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline.

**Associated documents**

- Child protection
- Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing
- Dealing with allegations of abuse made against a child or young person
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Photography and image sharing guidance
- [More information about what these policies and procedures should include is available from [learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection](http://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection)]

**Associated Documents**

- Guidance: Safeguarding children and protecting professional's in early years settings: Online safety guidance for practitioners (Feb 2019)
- Safeguarding Policy
- Prevent Duty