

# Tottenham War Memorial Early Childhood Centre

## Social Media and Website Policy

**To ensure the privacy of Centre individuals; and that Management Committee, families or staff members are not negatively impacted on or compromised by social networking or social media.**

### *Statutory and Legislation considerations:*

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Link to National Quality Standard

ECA Code of Ethics

Privacy Act 1988

### *Considerations:*

Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality of Records Policy

Dealing with Complaints and Feedback Policy

Family Involvement and Communication Policy

Staff Professionalism Policy

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

### **Rationale:**

Social media is changing the landscape of personal and professional risk. Content posted on social media can damage the reputation of the Centre, the Management Committee, staff and families and attract claims of defamation or unprofessional conduct. Guidelines and procedures are in place to establish parameters for its use.

### **Centre website:**

The Centre's website is maintained to inform families about the activities and services provided by the Tottenham War Memorial Early Childhood Centre. The Centre respects the privacy of educators, children and families. The Centre seeks to keep all records private and confidential and maintains records according to the *National Privacy Principles* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*.

### **Website:**

Aim: To establish and maintain a Centre website that is dynamic, accurate and presents a professional image of the Centre and serves the purpose for which it is designed.

- Website maintenance will be the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor and coordinating staff.
- The website will include such things as Centre policies, newsletters, special events, position descriptions for vacancies, and links to articles of interest for families or staff.

### **Social Networking:**

Social networking can be defined as a website used to socialise and communicate. These include but are not limited to Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. These social networking sites are **not** to be accessed while a staff member is working or **doing duties involved in their employment** as attention can be taken away from the care of children in attendance. They may be used at break time when children are settled for rest.

By posting on social media the Centre may be negatively impacted on and lead to:

- Allegations of damage to a person's reputation.
- Breaching a client's privacy.
- Showing Centre up as unprofessional or controversial in some way.

The Centre aims to use Facebook to enhance and promote community perceptions of our Centre by:

- Recognising the advantages of promoting the activities and goings-on of our Centre via Facebook posting.
- Our Management Committee Publicity Officer coordinating these entries.
- The Publicity Officer seeking the approval of the Centre Nominated Supervisor before any postings are made.
- Work posted is of a general description.
- Using photograph of daily events, environment and activities to show the Centre.
- Including articles to demonstrate learning through play.
- Conveying to families information about possible resources and activities to use at home.
- Seeking family feedback.
- Promoting upcoming events.
- Reaffirming details provided through other communication such as Centre newsletters, notices and flyers.
- Updating the enrolment form to reflect social media usage and seeking permission to post Centre activities and artwork.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

#### **The Nominated Supervisor will:**

- Ensure that no confidential information can be gained from the Centre's website. Individuals and services are not obliged to give personal information through the website. However, if an individual chooses to provide information to the Centre via email, that information will remain confidential.
- Ensure that no confidential information is used on Facebook and that the Centre, families and staff are seen in a professional manner at all times.
- Ensure that information gained via email can only be used by administration staff or management to contact a person, offer or send information about the Centre and to request feedback on the website or the Centre.
- Ensure that information gained about users from the website will only be used for statistical research for the Centre to ascertain future development of the website. This information will not be available to any other organisations.
- Encourage families and educators to give feedback on the website and how it can be improved to meet the needs of the community.
- Not disclose or publish any information related to educators, children or families without written consent from that individual or their family.
- Develop guidelines for educators regarding their participation with families currently connected with the Centre on social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter.

#### **Educators will:**

Follow guidelines for educators regarding their participation with families currently connected with the Centre on social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter.

#### **Guidelines and Procedures to take:**

- The Centre will include information about the social media policy to families.
- Management Committee and the Nominated Supervisor will include regular reminders in the Centre newsletters concerning social media responsibilities.
- All Centre personal will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement which includes a statement about the use of photos and being professional concerning information posted on social media sites.
- Staff and/ or Management Committee members are not permitted to discuss the Centre or its staff on social media. Failure to adhere to this policy will be seen as unprofessional behaviour and will be subject to disciplinary action.

- Social networking websites are not a private means of communication but can be accessed by the public, therefore, it is important not to share private information about Centre families or staff members.
- It is not permissible to use photos of children or any other information that may identify children or families on social media unless families have provided specific permission for this to occur. This strategy applies to staff, the Management Committee, students, and people on work experience, volunteers or any other person that may have access to children at the Centre during work hours.
- Maintain secure access.
- Avoid identity theft by limiting the amount of personal information disclosed.
- That the rules covering privacy equally apply to web-based technologies.
- Prohibiting comment about employment or family concerns through either personal or business use of social media.
- Take care in posting comments – take the time to reflect on how comments may be perceived.
- Not to make any offensive or defamatory remark about the Centre or its employees as this will be a breach of professionalism and
- Prohibiting online comments about families and employment.
- Commenting in a manner that has a negative impact on the Centre's reputation will be taken as a serious breach and will be dealt with as such.
- As a Centre employee post material that only portrays you in a professional way and not generate controversy.
- Posting photographs that contain images of children at the Centre is a serious breach of confidentiality.
- Personal cameras or video phones are not to be used to take photos/pictures or videos of children while at the Centre during regular work hours.
- Social media sites are for personal use only and are not to be accessed while staff members are at work.

## **EVALUATION**

The Centre's website is an information resource available to prospective families as well as current families and educators and abides by current legislation. The privacy and protection of children, families and educators is not compromised by participation on social media sites. A professional code of conduct is adhered to at all times.

Sources:

Community Childcare Co-operative example policy: Privacy online

PSCA Policies in Practice: Confidentiality and Privacy Guild Insurance: Social media risk – child care

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