

Use of Social Media Policy

2.21 Safeguarding...Use of Social Media

Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-school recognises that social media has become a part of everyday life for many individuals and families, including both staff and parents. Social media allows for the free and easy exchange of information, opinions and images. With particular regard to images of children and to enable Pre-school to comply with its strict Safeguarding requirements, it is necessary to set our terms around the use of social media in connection with how Pre-school is presented publicly.

The policy covers (but is not limited to) the following social media channels:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Personal Blogs

The scope of this policy applies to the following people:

- Employees
- Volunteers/work experience students
- Parents/Carers

Social Media and Employees

Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-school recognises that employees may be regular users of social media and has no intention to curtail their use of it beyond reasonable requests to adhere to Safeguarding regulations and professionalism.

- Employees are advised not to reveal publicly on social media that they are employed by Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-school.
- Employees must not discuss Pre-school (including colleagues, children, parents or the organisation) in conversations that take place on social media in any way that goes beyond giving out information which is already freely available on the Pre-school website.
- It is recognised that potential parents may ask publicly for opinions on Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-school and/or other Pre-schools in the area. Staff are advised not to engage in such discussions.
- If an employee becomes aware of any conversation taking place on social media about Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-school, and the tone of that conversation is critical of individual staff members or of the organisation, then it must be reported to the Manager for investigation.
- As tempting as it may be to defend colleagues and/or the organisation, employees should not enter into such conversations, unless it is to repeat information already publicly

available on the Pre-school website or to pass on an official statement prepared by the Manager and/or the Committee in response to the discussion.

- Employees must not create any social media friendships with parents of current children at Pre-school – this is so that the Manager can be confident that the correct professional relationships are being maintained between staff and parents.
- Pre-school will make an exception to this rule if an employee has an existing relationship with a child's parent(s) before that child starts at Pre-school. This rule no longer applies once a child has left Pre-school.
- Any breaches of this policy will be investigated and could result in disciplinary action being taken against the individual concerned.

Social Media and Volunteers/Work Experience Students

Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-school recognises that volunteers and work experience students may be regular users of social media and has no intention to curtail their use of it beyond reasonable requests to adhere to Safeguarding regulations and professionalism. It is also recognised that such individuals may not have the training on Safeguarding that an employee has, so the following brief guidelines are provided:

- Remember that nothing you put onto social media can be considered fully private, no matter how strong your privacy settings are.
- Do not state on social media where you will be volunteering / on placement.
- Do not discuss Pre-school in any way on social media; this includes the organisation, its location, its policies and practices, its staff/committee members, its children and its parents/carers. This rule continues to apply after you have finished your volunteering/work experience and exists to ensure appropriate confidentiality and professionalism can be maintained by the organisation and its staff in relation to how it is presented publicly.
- If you become aware of any discussion taking place on social media about Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-school, do not enter into it. However, if anything about the discussion gives you cause for concern, then it should be reported to the Manager.
- Do not attempt to establish any relationships with parents/carers of children at Pre-school on social media during the course of your volunteering/work experience.
- The only exception that will be allowed to this rule is if you have an existing social media relationship with a parent/carer before you began your role with Pre-school.

Social Media and Parents/Carers

Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-school recognises that parents/carers and their families may be regular users of social media and has no intention to curtail their use of it beyond reasonable requests to adhere to Safeguarding regulations and professionalism. It is also recognised that such parents/carers may not be wholly familiar with the requirements of Safeguarding, so the following brief guidelines are provided:

- Remember that nothing you put onto social media can be considered fully private, no matter how strong your privacy settings are.
- Be cautious on how you discuss Pre-school in conversations on Social media. Do not reveal:

- the location of Pre-school.
 - the names of staff members/volunteers working at Pre-school, or anything else that could reveal their identities.
 - The names of other children and their parents/carers who attend Pre-school, or anything else that could reveal their identities.
- If you have any negative opinions or concerns about any aspect of how Pre-school is run, do not discuss it on social media. Such concerns should always be reported to the Manager so that they can be investigated, discussed and resolved formally.
 - If any opinions are discussed on social media which result in any detrimental effect on Pre-school, its employees, its children or its parents/carers, then Pre-school will follow formal proceedings to investigate.
 - Do not create any social media friendships with staff/volunteers at Pre-school – this is so that the Manager can be confident that the correct professional relationships are being maintained between staff and parents.
 - Pre-school will make an exception to this rule if a parent has an existing relationship with an employee/volunteer before your child starts at Pre-school. This rule no longer applies once your child has left Pre-school.
 - If you become aware of any conversation taking place on social media about Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-school and the tone of that conversation is critical of individual staff members or of the organisation, then it must be reported to the Manager for investigation.
 - The Cameras and Mobile Devices Policy instructs parents/carers that any photographs they take at Pre-school's special events are for personal use only and should not be put onto any social media channel.

Conditions of Use of Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-school Parents/Carers Facebook Group

Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-school recognises that many parents/carers are regular users of Facebook and that some parents/carers have identified the benefits of having a Facebook group exclusively for current parents/carers. The use of this group would be for announcements/discussions such as:

- Repeating messages – this will enable parents/carers who's children are dropped off by someone else or who do not attend on a particular day to stay informed about important messages.
- Encouraging support of fundraising activities.
- Providing Parents/Carers with an insight to the pre-school day, sharing our experiences
- Providing parents/carers who don't know each other, with a means of contacting each other without having to ask Pre-school to do it for them.
- Sharing of useful information, e.g. suggestions on enhancing/creating nativity play costumes.
- Reuniting lost property to the correct person.

To be able to maintain appropriate controls of professionalism and Safeguarding, Pre-school has identified the following requirements for the management of this group:

- The group must always be kept as a “Closed” group
- Only current parents/carers may be members.
- When new children start at Pre-school, the parents/carers should be sent an invite to join us on e-mail. New parents/carers will be invited to join shortly after the start of the summer holidays before their child starts.
- Membership of the group is entirely voluntary and parents/carers may leave or join at any time.
- When children leave Pre-school, the parents/carers should be removed from the group. This removal should happen shortly after the start of the summer holidays following their last day.
- There should be 3 administrators to monitor activity and deal with any issues that arise. These 3 administrators are the Manager Rachel Cottrell and 2 appointed members of staff.
- Any negative discussions about Pre-school and/or its staff should be removed. The individual posting them should be contacted directly by an administrator, to explain the reason for the removal and the issue in discussion should be passed on to the Manager for appropriate follow up.
- Administrators should be the only people inviting parents to join the group.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

Our Lady of Lourdes Pre-School

Held on

_____ (date)

Date to be reviewed

_____ (date)

Signed on behalf of the management
committee:

Name of signatory

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/committee)

