



Safeguarding Children - 1.4 Staff Conduct and the community

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Policy Statement

Staff conduct reflects on Starlings Preschool even when staff are outside the setting and not working, whenever it is possible that their connection with the setting could be known, including on-line. Staff are expected to ensure their conduct reflects a responsible attitude to child welfare and education, safeguarding, inclusion and a respect for British values.

Section 1 Confidentiality (Consider also our records policy.)

Staff understand that it is essential that confidential information about children and their families is not shared without parental consent.

Confidential information

Confidential information is 'personal information of a private or sensitive nature' that:

- is not already lawfully in the public domain or readily available from another public source
- has been shared in a relationship where the person giving the information could reasonably expect it would not be shared with others.

Pre-school setting staff can be said to have a 'confidential relationship' with families. Some families share information about themselves readily and should be consulted about whether this information is confidential or not. Where third parties share information about an



individual, staff need to check if that is confidential, both in terms of the subject sharing the information and the person whom the information concerns.

Information shared in the context of a pre-school setting is confidential to the setting and, in some defined circumstances, to other staff within the organisation. For example, a pre-school setting employee may discuss a family in a supervision meeting with a senior manager for the purpose of professional support, clarification and accountability regarding the organisation's procedures.

There may be times when confidential information about a family may need to be shared with others in the organisation – for example, a case that may be reported in the press would need to be brought to the attention of the committee.

Breaching confidentiality

A breach of confidentiality occurs when confidential information is not authorised by the person who provided it or to whom it relates, putting said person in danger or causing them embarrassment or pain. It is not a breach of confidentiality if the information was provided on the understanding that it would be shared with a limited number of people, or where there was consent to the sharing.

Exceptions

Confidential information may only be shared without authorisation from the person who provided it, or to whom it relates, if it's in the public interest – i.e. where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of doing so. The decision should never be made as an individual, but after consideration with managers, who can provide support, and sometimes ensure protection. The three critical criteria for sharing information without consent, or overriding refusal to give consent, are:

- Where there is evidence that a child is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm.
- Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.



- To prevent significant harm arising to children and young people or serious harm to adults, including the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime.

Where staff are considered to have breached confidentiality and these exclusions do not apply, the management team will consider evidence from all parties. Disciplinary action will be considered.

Section 2 Social Media

Policy statement

Starlings Preschool recognises that social interaction on the internet is an important and integral part of life and, if used correctly, offers opportunities to develop community involvement with the pre-school and build business opportunities. It can also offer valuable insights and information which, when considered in context and with care, may be relevant when considering the welfare of a child. Starlings Preschool recognises that social media may create a situation when the relationship between a member of staff and a child's family has become more than purely professional, in the view of either or both parties. Anything that alters this dynamic has the potential to compromise the decisions an individual may make when assessing risks to a child and Safeguarding.

Procedure

Staff will divulge where they have a social media friendship or similar with parents or families of Starlings Preschool children. Staff will report any Safeguarding concerns because of information on Social Media in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

Lead Professionals will be alerted when a parent or relative is unusually eager to develop relationships other than professional relationships with multiple members of staff, especially where this is not a natural progression of a relationship/friendship which develops in normal situations.

Acceptable use

Members of staff and committee are bound by our Code of Conduct and confidentiality procedures and these also apply to on-line activities. Communication with learners, parents/carers and colleagues should be professional and take place via official setting



communication channels e.g. work provided emails/numbers to protect both staff and learners when it relates to pre-school. Communication should be transparent and open to scrutiny. Staff and committee members must be aware that if they or another member of staff are targeted online, for example online bullying or harassment, they should inform their manager.

Monitoring

Social media usage will be discussed at the Starlings Preschool staff meeting and Supervision interviews under the Safeguarding section. This will be to help recognise trends and identify any potential risk factors and assess the effectiveness and implementation of this policy. Social Media interaction record forms will be retained for inspection by inspection authorities e.g. Ofsted.

Complaints

When anyone (Parent, staff member or other concerned party) has a concern, this should be dealt with through the setting's usual complaints procedure.

Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations-for-managers>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-guidance-for-practitioners>

Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers (DCFS 2008)



This policy was adopted by Starlings Preschool

On 6th September 2021

Date to be reviewed

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of signatory Tricia Hunt

Role of signatory Chair Person