Little Disciples Childcare

Social Media Policy

"Caring for children, supporting parents, and sparking imaginations – where quality, affordability, and excitement meet!"

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1.0	September 2023	Initial Release for Provider changes	S. Gocher	A. Stephens	Annually – September 2024
2.0	January 2025	Policy Review	S. Gocher	A. Stephens	Annually – January 2026
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Policy Statement

At Little Disciples Childcare, we are committed to providing a seamless and cohesive approach to childcare across all our services. This policy and procedure apply equally to both our Nursery Plus provision and our Breakfast, Afterschool, and Holiday Club services. This integrated framework ensures consistent standards of care, safety, and quality across all aspects of our provision, fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for every child in our care.

Use of social media Policy

The term social media outlines a range of web-based applications such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube as well as dating websites, blogs, emails, texting, and instant messaging. In terms of benefits to an educational practitioner, it can have many such as:

- Building and maintaining professional relationships.
- Giving you access to support networks, proving a means of discussing professional issues, and sharing good practice
- Providing access to professional learning opportunities and/or educational resources.

In addition to the many benefits, there are also several dangers and pitfalls you may need to be aware of when using social media. This policy aims to outline the dangers and pitfalls and highlight how they could affect you and potentially your ability to continue in your role.

The way in which Social Media is used in your personal life is your decision however all practitioners should still exercise caution in the content you upload and how this may be perceived. It is inevitable that people (parents, public and prospective employers) will be curious about you as an individual and may try to find out more information about you; it is therefore of the utmost importance that you are cautious about which social media you use, and how and with whom you communicate.

Please bear the following points in mind.

- The standards expected of you do not change because you are communicating/using social media
- Email, texting, blogging, and other social media communication encourage casual dialogue. Innocent comments or posts can be misconstrued or manipulated.
- You can be vulnerable to unintended misuses
- Acknowledging, liking, or sharing someone else's post can imply you endorse or support their point of view
- You can be mentioned/identifiable in inappropriate posts, sometimes without your knowledge or consent
- Your content online does not have to relate to learners for it to have a bearing on your fitness to practice.
- Postings online are subject to the same laws on copyright or defamation as written. Verbal communication
- Unwise behaviour online can result in criminal or civil action.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Please be aware that material you may have shared online may only have been intended for friends or family however could be accessible to a much wider audience, and that once uploaded to the social media application, it may not be possible to delete it or control how widely it is shared.

Some Social Media applications have privacy settings that allow users to control and put some restrictions on who has access to their personal information however this may not be the case for all applications. It is therefore important you familiarise yourself with the privacy settings on any social media site you use and keep in mind the limitations of keeping your information private online.

Act responsibly

- Conduct yourself online in a way in which does not call into question your position as a professional
- Consider your online persona and how this may be perceived by others. Be careful when writing profiles or establishing email addresses.
- Never create a false identity
- Consider who or what you associate with online, and always maintain professional boundaries with learners
- Never exchange private phone numbers, personal email addresses, or photographs of a personal nature with a learner.
- Never accept or initiate Facebook friend requests or other such invites with current or former learners. Discretion should be used when dealing with friend requests from parents
- Ensure that your privacy settings are appropriate and be aware that not all information can be protected on the web – there is no privacy mechanism that is 100% guaranteed.
- Ensure your settings prohibit others from tagging you in any photographs or update without your permission
- Be aware of photographs posted online which include you, where they may be posted, and who may be able to view them
- Do not discuss learners, parents, or colleagues online, or criticise your employer
- Be aware that others may try and view your online social media profiles, or even just Google your name. For example potential employers, learners, parents, etc..

Summary

Before posting anything online, ask yourself:

- Might anything I'm posting reflect poorly on me, my employer, or my profession?
- Is my intention to make the post driven by personal or professional reasons
- Am I confident that the posting, if accessed by others would be considered reasonable and appropriate for a professional?