

Social Networking Policy for Staff

(Please read this in conjunction with the staff behaviour policy and the electronic devices and IT policy).

Statement of Intent

YMCA Brunel Group acknowledges that social networks are very popular and used by all ages and groups in society. The most popular social networks are web based, commercial, and not designed for educational use. They include sites like **Facebook, Instagram Tik Tok and Twitter**. For example.

Expectations

YMCA Brunel Group has a high reputation to maintain and comments made on social networking site such as 'Facebook' could have an impact on how parents using the preschool, nursery or out of school club view the staff or the business. As childcare workers, we have a professional image to uphold and how we conduct ourselves on-line helps determine this image. There have been instances of childcare professionals demonstrating professional misconduct while engaging in inappropriate dialogue about their childcare setting and/ or children, staff and parents; or posting pictures and videos of themselves engaged in inappropriate activity outside work. Increasingly, staffs' online identities are too often public and can cause serious repercussions, both privately and professionally.

These can affect a person's suitability to work with children.

One of the hall marks of social networks is the ability to "friend" or follow others – creating a group of others that share interest and personal news. You are instructed **not** to accept invitations to "friend" children and/or parents/carers within any social networking sites. When children and parents/carers gain access into a childcare worker's network and view personal photos or comments, the dynamic is compromised. It is important to maintain a professional relationship to avoid situations that could be misconstrued; and/or are contrary to the 'Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who Work with Children and Young People (2015)'.

We expect that you comply with the following practices as well as discussing any concerns with the preschool, nursery or out of school manager:

Friends and Friending

- Do not accept children and parents/carers as friends on personal social networking sites.
- Do not initiate friendships with parents/carers but remain a professional worker.
- You remember that people classified as "Friends" can download and share your information with others.

Content of your social media pages

- Do not write or respond to anything deemed defamatory, obscene, improper, or libellous. Exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterisations.
- Weigh up whether a particular posting puts your suitability as a childcare professional at risk.
- Post only what you want the world to see.
- Imagine that all work contacts are all able to visit the site. On a social network site, once you have posted something it may be available, even after you have removed it from the site.
- Do not discuss children, parents/carers or work colleagues or publicly criticise the settings policies, activities or personnel.
- Do not post images that include children and or parents/carers.
- Images should not be posted of yourself or other colleagues wearing clothing which displays the YMCA Logo.
- Images should not be posted of yourself or other colleagues wearing clothing that is sexually explicit and that could potentially compromise your safety both online and in person

Security

- Visit your profile's security and privacy settings. At a minimum, childcare professionals should have privacy settings set to "only friends".
- "Friends of friends" and "Networks and Friends" open your content to a larger group of unknown people. Your privacy and that of your family may be at risk. People you do not know may be looking at you, your work, your home, your children, grandchildren and your lives!

- Your place of work should not indicate that you work in a childcare setting; this could leave you at risk of being groomed by unknown persons.
- Please tell us if you see defamatory comments posted about you relating to your/our work.
- You risk disciplinary action if you do not adhere to the above points.

Helpful advice

Childcare professionals can seek advice from this publication:

Safeguarding children and protecting professionals on-line in early years - on-line safety considerations 2019

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

Signed on behalf of YMCA Bath Group
(Signed copy in Head Office)

Mike Fairbeard

Role of Signatory

Chief Executive

Date of Review of Policy

January 2025

