**42: Social Media**

Willows take the safety and privacy of children and young people extremely seriously as a matter of both legal and moral importance.

Social Media include the various types of websites that enable people to interact online. Examples of these multi-media, social networking sites are Facebook, You Tube, blogs, wikis, podcast, forums, micro blogging and contact communities among others. This policy is in addition to and compliments our other policies regarding the use of technology, computers, email, photographic equipment and the internet.

Willows prevent staff from publishing or commenting via any form of social media during work hours or from using work facilities, or in any way that suggests they are doing so in connection with one of our settings.

In accordance with our duties under The Data Protection Act 1998, we strictly prohibit all staff from disclosing any information regarding children or staff (written or pictorial), and any other confidential information regarding the setting, even in private messages between other members of staff.

If a staff member is required to be engaged in work related social media, the staff member must obtain the permission of the directors, Kym Elliston, Sara Pinch and Helen Howett.

Staff may not use Willows name for social media identities, login ID’s and user names without prior approval from the directors. Our logos and trademarks must not appear on internet posting unless staff are speaking on the company’s behalf and clear permission has been granted.

When staff are allowed to identify themselves as employees of the setting, there is responsibility for representing the setting in a professional manner. Any opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the setting management or staff.

Staff must always exercise good judgement and common sense regardless of whether online comments relate to their job.

All staff must respect copyright, privacy, fair use and other applicable laws including the company’s own copyright and brands.

Staff must not post comments that can be interpreted as:

* Personal attacks
* Defamation
* Bullying and harassment
* Spam
* Offensive comment
* Illegal activities

Any misuse of social networking sites that has a negative impact on the company may be regarded as a disciplinary offence. Instances where the company is brought into disrepute may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct and disciplinary action will be applied. Please refer to the **Staff Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures.**

This policy may be read in conjunction with the **Photography, Mobile Phones & iPads Policy**, the **Anti-Bullying Policy** and the **Safe Internet Use Policy**.

Anything published on social media will be around for a long time, so staff should always consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.