

## **No. 24 – Social Media Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This policy exists to ensure that Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup (GEP) and its community use digital and social media in safe, appropriate and inclusive ways.
- 1.2. GEP has a duty of care to provide a safe environment for children attending the setting and for their families, and for our volunteers, trustees and staff members. It is crucial that our families and the public at large have confidence in the pre-school's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that all members of our pre-school community use social media responsibly so that the confidentiality of everyone within the pre-school community, as well as the reputation of the pre-school, is safeguarded.
- 1.3. *Italicised words* are defined in the glossary at the end of this document.

### **2. Scope**

- 2.1. This policy applies to all trustees, paid staff, volunteers, service users and digital visitors. Anyone using digital and social media at or via GEP is subject to the guidance set out in this policy.
- 2.2. This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official pre-school purposes.
- 2.3. This policy applies to *social media platforms* current and future, including but not limited to: social networking sites (for example Facebook), blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chat rooms and content sharing sites such as YouTube.
- 2.4. At time of writing, GEP manages a website, ([www.grindlefordandeyamplaygroup.org.uk](http://www.grindlefordandeyamplaygroup.org.uk)) which contains a blog, a Facebook [page](#) and an Instagram page.

### **3. Basic principles**

- 3.1. Professional distance: We expect our trustees, paid staff and volunteers to keep a professional distance online, just as they would in the offline world.
- 3.2. Compared with a conversation in the offline real world, technology increases the potential for messages to be taken out of context, misinterpreted or forwarded to others. All members of GEP's community must bear in mind that once they place something in the public domain, it is there permanently for people to access, change and share with others.
- 3.3. When signing up to social networking/media sites and blogs it is the responsibility of the individual to ensure they adhere to the terms and conditions of the site.
- 3.4. Any trustee, staff member or volunteer found to be using social media for inappropriate purposes, whether personally or professionally, including but not limited to bullying, harassment, distribution of offensive material, accessing or transmitting pornography, contact with extremist groups, contravening any laws or posting any confidential information relating to GEP, its employees, volunteers or service-users, will face disciplinary action. Trustees, paid staff and volunteers must not bring the organisation into disrepute in their use of digital and social media. We reserve the right to terminate our relationship as childcare provider with any service-user who is found to be using social media in this manner.

### **4. Legal framework**

- 4.1. GEP is committed to ensuring that our services meet the highest standards of confidentiality. All trustees, paid staff and volunteers are bound by a legal duty of confidence.
- 4.2. Anyone using social media at or via GEP should be aware that:
  - the disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Data Protection Act 2018

- other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including but not limited to the Libel Act 1843, Defamation Act 2013, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, Malicious Communications Act 1998, Communications Act 2003, and the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

4.3. Anyone using social media in relation to GEP should be aware of the laws in regard to copyright and plagiarism, and that posting of media/information about another individual without their permission is not allowed.

## 5. Digital and social media use for trustees, paid staff & volunteers

5.1. The key principles in digital and social media use are the same as in any professional interaction. Trustees, paid staff and volunteers should:

- reflect the positive messages they give service-users through their public behaviour and moderate their use of SNS to reflect their status at GEP accordingly just as they would moderate their behaviour in the offline world to reflect their responsible, role-modelling status.
- be clear about where the boundaries are in the support they offer to service-users.
- ensure that they are not put in the position of having to deal with information or situations that they are not confident or comfortable to deal with.
- avoid using their personal social networking account to communicate with service-users about GEP-related issues or activities, as this will blur boundaries between professional and personal lives.
- Make it clear that they are acting in a personal capacity when entering into social media discussions outside work, where they may be wrongly perceived to be representing GEP.

5.2. Interaction of trustees, paid staff and volunteers with service-users: as an organisation operating within a close-knit community, GEP recognises that some trustees, paid staff and volunteers have close personal ties with our service users. It is unreasonable to expect them to cut their personal social networks. However, this creates potential risk. If trustees, paid staff and volunteers have their own personal *SNS profile*, they must ensure that service-users cannot access any content, media or information from that *profile page* that relates to GEP or which would undermine their position as a professional, trusted and responsible adult working or volunteering with service-users at GEP.

5.3. Staff are advised to manage their personal security settings to ensure that their information is only available to people they choose to share information with.

## 6. Use of social media for official pre-school purposes

6.1. Only GEP's official pages, profiles, groups and sites can be used to share information relating to GEP. This boundary must not be confused by the use of personal SNS to convey information about GEP by any trustees, paid staff and volunteers.

6.2. Paid staff, volunteers or trustees may only set up pages for events, activities or groups for which they are responsible which have been agreed by GEP's management committee. The person with responsibility for social media must always be the *administrator* of these spaces.

6.3. Any *group, discussions or media-sharing* established by a GEP representative must employ GEP's *Moderation Rules* (see Section 7) together with a set of GEP 'house rules' for the platform, available to those who are a party to it, which establish the kind of language, *discussions* and *media-sharing* allowed.

6.4. Images taken of children by parents/carers and family members are for personal use including a private social media account viewable only by family and friends. Parents publishing photos on a public account should check on the ICO website to ensure they are aware of their obligations under data protection law ([www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)).

- 6.5. Personal social media accounts are not to be accessed by any trustee, staff member or volunteer whilst in the setting or other GEP-hosted event or location.
- 6.6. Under no circumstances is GEP's IT equipment to be used to access personal social media accounts.
- 6.7. Those responsible for social media platforms must keep GEP's account and password details secure.
- 6.8. **The following staff member has overall responsibility for monitoring social media interaction on GEP's website, blog, Facebook page and Instagram:**

---

## 7. Moderation rules

- 7.1. The administrator appointed by GEP of any given social media platform will delete any of the following:
  - Violent, obscene, profane, hateful, or racist posts, links or images
  - Comments that threaten or defame any person or organisation
  - Solicitations, advertisements, or endorsements of any financial, commercial, political party or not-for-profit organisation
  - Comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity
  - Multiple successive off-topic posts by a single user
  - Repetitive posts copied and pasted or duplicated by single or multiple users

## 8. Use of social media for personal purposes

- 8.1. Only GEP's official pages, profiles, groups and sites can be used to share information relating to GEP. This boundary must not be confused by the use of personal SNS to convey information about GEP by any trustees, paid staff and volunteers.
- 8.2. The use of social media by trustees, staff and volunteers outside of the official pages should have no reference to GEP, its activities or any member of its community, past or present, in relation to their activities for/with GEP.

## 9. Safeguarding and social media

- 9.1. Trustees, paid staff and volunteers should:
  - ensure that they have a clear understanding of who to contact in the event of concerns about service-users safety online. The procedure and chain of authority found in GEP's Safeguarding Policy should be applied.
  - be mindful that SNS sites happen in real time and some service-users are often constantly online and will see things as they happen. Even if a comment is deleted straight away, someone might have already seen it.
  - must never provide personal details about service-users on any website or social media site (this includes full name, email address, etc).
  - must ensure that GEP has permission to use any photos of service-users. No names should be used in connection with images, especially of children. *Tagging* of service-users in photos/videos is strictly prohibited.
  - only use appropriate photos, as with a public notice board, and be aware that everyone can view them.
  - should report any concerns they might have about the way in which a service-user is attempting to contact them to their line-manager.

## 10. Disciplinary Action

- Should a staff member, trustee or volunteer be found in violation of this policy it will result in the committee pursuing disciplinary action.
- Any defamation of character with regard to individuals connected or associated with Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup will be considered Gross Misconduct.

#### **11. E-safety complaints procedure**

- Complaints regarding the misuse of social media will be dealt with by the Supervisor and/or Chair.
- Any complaint about staff misuse must be referred to the Supervisor and/or Chair.
- Any complaints will be handled according to GEP's complaints procedure, with specific reference to this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

023 GEP Acceptable use of recording devices policy

031 GEP Information sharing policy

032 GEP Confidentiality and client access policy

034 GEP Safeguarding children policy

This procedure was adopted at a meeting of Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup

Held on:

Date to be reviewed:

Signed on behalf of the committee:

Name of signatory:

Role of signatory:

## E-policy glossary

Term	definition
<b>Administrator</b>	This is the individual who has overall responsibility for GEP's official involvement with any social media platform.
<b>Blog</b>	Contraction of the term 'web log', a blog is a form of online journal with articles posted on particular subjects. WordPress is one of the most popular blog creation websites.
<b>Defamation of character (or slander)</b>	Generally speaking, defamation is the issuance of a false statement about another person, which causes that person to suffer harm. Making a defamatory statement in a printed or fixed medium, such as social networking sites, is libel.
<b>Discussions</b>	These take place on a <i>Discussion Board</i> and are the same as a <i>Forum</i> . As an <i>Administrator</i> you can start a new <i>thread</i> which is a question or statement. People are then able to respond to the question or statement.
<b>Facebook</b>	The web's most popular <i>social network site (SNS)</i> which allows users to present an online ' <i>profile</i> ', form online groups and <i>media-share</i> .
<b>Facebook Page</b>	A public profile used by charities, organisations, businesses, celebrities or public figures. It allows them to share information with individuals or other organisations that are supporters and have 'liked' your page.
<b>Facebook Group</b>	Facebook Groups are hubs for <i>discussions</i> and allow individuals who are Facebook members and have a Profile Page to join. Groups can be closed and private where only you as creator can invite people to join, or the group can be open and public, where anyone can join and see the information being shared amongst members.
<b>Images</b>	Photographs, digital photographs, webcam, mobile phones, film and video recordings
<b>Instagram</b>	A photo and video sharing social networking service
<b>Media-Sharing</b>	A term used to describe the exchange of photos, videos and links online between individuals and organisations.
<b>Moderation rules (or 'house rules')</b>	Guidelines or rules for those you are engaging with in an on-line public space such as a group. This can include the sorts of language, <i>discussions</i> and <i>media sharing</i> allowed. Please see an example of Moderation Rules in Section 6.
<b>Privacy Settings</b>	These allow you to put restrictions on who can see the information on your <i>SNS Profile Page</i> . It also allows you to restrict how and with whom information about you is shared publicly.
<b>Profile Page</b>	This is your SNS individual profile and is your launch pad for using other SNS tools on the site. Your Profile page can be made the 'administrator' of a page or group.
<b>SNS/Social Networking</b>	Online tools that allow people and /or organisations to connect together for example <b>Twitter, facebook, YouTube</b> .

<b>Site(s) or Platform(s)</b>	
<b>Social Media Marketing</b>	Using on-line tools to promote and raise awareness of your company for a specific objective.
<b>Social Media</b>	An umbrella term for any on-line tool or phone application ( <i>app</i> ) which allows an individual or organisation to communicate with their service users and supporters. It also allows its users to enter a dialogue with each other. This can be through sharing of images or videos, sending messages to one another or writing articles which other users can alter or post comments on.
<b>Status update</b>	450 characters on Facebook and 140 characters on Twitter in length, this is the exchange of comments, information and links from your <i>Profile Page</i> to the <i>Timeline</i> of those you are linked to as 'Friends'.
<b>Tagging</b>	A tag is a keyword or term assigned to a piece of information. It helps describe an item and allows it to be found by browsing or searching.
<b>Thread</b>	A topic of discussion taking place on a <i>Discussion Board</i> or <i>Forum</i> . A thread begins as a question or statement and is continued with an exchange of comments/responses.
<b>Timeline / Wall</b>	A space provided with your <i>Profile Page</i> or <i>fan/like page</i> to share messages, opinions, and links to those you are connected with as 'Friends' or 'Fans'.
<b>Twitter</b>	Micro-blogging service which allows users to provide 140-character updates. Users can 'follow' each other but unlike other social networks, it is not automatically reciprocal. Twitter allows you to 'follow' a great many people / organisations who will be communicating about specific subjects regularly and as such is a good way of getting the latest information specific to your interest.
<b>YouTube</b>	Video-sharing network which allows users to upload and share video footage with others. 'Links' to these videos are then easily sharable through other mediums and platforms.