**ALLOWAY EARLY YEARS CENTRE**

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

RATIONALE

*“I am fully informed about what information is shared with others about me” (2.14)*

 *(Health and social Care Standards, 2018)*

“*You have the right to privacy” (Article 16)*

 *(UNCRC, 1989)*

*“Respecting and maintaining the dignity and privacy of service users” (1.4)*

*“Respecting confidential information and clearly explaining agency policies about confidentiality to service users and carers” (2.3)*

*(SSSC Codes of Practice, 2016)*

AIM

To explain the acceptable usage of Social Media platforms for staff. The policy will outline considerations for employees of its proper use, and also to identify any potential pitfalls.

What do we mean by social media?

For the purpose of this guidance, social media means the online platforms you use to engage – to create relationships, have conversations and communicate with others. It’s the content that you upload to platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, WhatsApp, Snapchat etc. It could be posting a comment, video or photograph or replying to other people’s posts or a blog, video, podcast, for example.

OBJECTIVES

As a registered worker, you must work to the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers (the Code) and follow the same standards with your online presence as you would in any aspect of your life.

The same professional expectations and guidelines apply online as in the real world. Here are some examples from the Code that are relevant.

* I will respect and maintain the dignity and privacy of people who use services.
* I will be truthful, open, honest and trustworthy.
* I will communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.
* As a social service worker, I must uphold public trust and confidence in social services.
* I will respect confidential information and clearly explain my employer’s policies about confidentiality to people who use services and carers.
* I will not abuse, neglect or harm people who use services, carers or my colleagues.
* I will not abuse the trust of people who use services or carers, or the access I have to personal information about them or their property, home or workplace.
* I will not form inappropriate relationships with people who use services or carers.
* I will not behave, while in or outside work, in a way which would bring my suitability to work in social services into question.

IMPLEMENTATION

Sharing information

When you post information online think about whether it is something you should be sharing. If the information is confidential and is about a person who uses social services, their family or carers, don’t share it online. Nor should you post any information or views that reflect negatively on you, your employer or the social service profession.

Maintaining boundaries

Using social media can create risks, particularly where personal and professional boundaries become unclear.

Think carefully before accepting friend requests from people who use your service. If you only know someone because they use your service you shouldn’t become friends with them.

If a person who uses your service, their family or carer contacts you about their care or other professional matters through your private profile tell them that you cannot mix social and professional relationships.

Do not use social media to discuss people who use social services or their care with them or anyone else.

Protect yourself

Other people can easily find and see your personal information and profiles as well as the posts on your social media. Think about how accessible you are online. For example, you can limit who can read your posts and turn off the ability for your profile to appear in online searches. You can also make some accounts private like Instagram and Twitter.

However, social media sites do not guarantee confidentiality whatever privacy settings are in place. Remember to update your privacy settings regularly.

But above all, remember that everything you post online is public. People can easily find, copy and share your posts without you knowing. Everything you post online can be traced back to you and there is a permanent record, even after deleting it.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required in light of experience or any new national/local initiatives.

Updated Sept 25 – L. Miller