



E-Safety and Networking Policy

Purpose

E-Safety concerns safeguarding children, young people and staff in the digital world. Technology is an important part of everyday life and so E-Safety focuses on learning to understand and use new technology in a positive and safe way.

The purpose of this Policy therefore is to help support and protect children and staff when using technology in the setting.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, visitors and members of the public who use our premises. The policy covers Internet, email and all electronic communications via computers, laptops, mobile phones, iPhones and wireless technology.

Responsibilities

All staff members are responsible for the following:

- Understanding the risk and responsibility that is part of the 'Duty Of Care' that applies to everyone working with children.
- Understanding the significance of E-Safety which highlights the importance of safeguarding children and keeping them safe, which is of paramount importance.
- Reporting any knowledge or suspicion of behaviour that contravenes this policy.
- Being aware of the potential risks of using social networking sites eg Facebook, and the importance of considering the materials they post and how publishing unsuitable materials may affect their professional status.
- Protecting themselves from legal challenge and ensuring that they work within the boundaries of professional behaviour.
- Ensuring that they do not create any unnecessary business risk to **(High Kirk Community Playgroup)** by the misuse of the Internet or email systems.
- Complying with current legislation.
- Using the Internet in an acceptable way.

In particular, the following is deemed unacceptable use or behaviour by staff:

- Visiting Internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material.

- Sending, forwarding, distributing or retaining email or text messages that contain language or images that are abusive, aggressive, obscene or offensive.
- Using the Internet to send offensive or harassing materials to others.
- Making any improper or discriminatory reference to a person's race, colour, religion or belief system, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, disabilities or physique, and forwarding or distributing any material which does so.
- Publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false materials about **(High Kirk Community Playgroup or their staff/colleagues)**.
- Using work email systems to set up or send chain letters, viral emails or spam.
- Using the Internet for personal purposes during work time.
- Using the computer to participate in any form of fraud, theft or software or music piracy.
- Failing to take due care to make sure confidential and/or personal information goes to the correct recipient.
- Undertaking deliberate activities that waste staff effort or networked resources.
- Sending an unauthorised email on behalf of an individual inside or outside **(High Kirk Community Playgroup)** without their knowledge or consent.

Specific arrangements for the use of all mobile phones(this includes iPhones) are as follows:

- Staff/volunteers/students working directly with children **will not carry a mobile phone on their person at any time.** Mobile phones will be kept in the Playgroup Supervisor's main store.
- Mobile phones and conversations within the playroom, large hall, story room and outdoor play area can be very disruptive and they divert the staff, volunteers and students' attention away from the responsibility of looking after the children. **Therefore staff, volunteers and students working directly with children must not use mobile phones except in emergencies.**
- If calls must be received by staff/volunteers/students they should respect those in the playgroup by keeping the conversation brief, or where possible, return the call after the playgroup session has finished.
- If lengthy or urgent calls must be taken or made then the staff member/volunteer/student must inform the playgroup supervisor.
- Urgent calls to mobiles must be held outside the main playroom or in the playgroup supervisor's main store **away from the children.**

- **Visitors** to the setting will be informed, by the playgroup supervisor, that mobile phones cannot be used when interacting with the children and, in keeping with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, will not be left unsupervised at any time when on the premises.
- During group outings nominated staff will have access to the setting's nominated mobile phone, which is to be used for emergency purposes only.

Playgroup Supervisor/Committee Chairperson's role

The Playgroup Supervisor/Committee Chairperson, Mrs Lorraine Dempsey/Mrs Ruth Millar, are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that staff are made aware of and understand this policy and how it links to other relevant policies.
- Putting relevant systems in place to ensure the protection of information and appropriate access to the Internet, eg passwords on computers, limited access to certain websites.
- Monitoring the validity of the policy.
- Monitoring staff/volunteers/students to ensure they comply with the policy; this includes the right of supervisor/committee chairperson to access emails, images and internet sites visited, where there is suspicion of improper use of work/personal computers, laptops or mobile phones on premises.
- Dealing with breaches of the policy and ensuring that the highest standards of practice are maintained.

Links to other Policies

Child and Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
 Confidentiality Policy
 Disciplinary Policy
 Mobile Phone and Camera Policy

Breach of Policy

All employees, volunteers, relief workers should be aware that any failure to comply with this policy will be taken seriously and may be dealt with in accordance with (High Kirk Community Playgroup Disciplinary Policy and Procedures). If an employee is found to have breached the policy, they will face a disciplinary penalty ranging from a verbal warning to a dismissal. Where a criminal offence is suspected, the matter will be referred to the PSNI.

E-Safety and Networking Policy agreed and adopted by High Kirk Community Playgroup

Signed _____ Date

Committee Chairperson