



The Children's Ark
Church Road
Pendeen
Cornwall
TR19 7SE
Tel (01736) 787167
childrensark@tiscali.co.uk
Charity ref: 11473898

Ofsted:
EV457353

Social Networking Policy

Introduction

The widespread availability and use of social networking platforms have brought opportunities to engage and communicate in new ways. However, it is important that those using social media are aware of their responsibilities.

The Children's Ark committee recognises that many of its employees participate in social networking websites such as, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Bebo, networking sharing services e.g. Blackberry Messenger, blogs, chatrooms and message boards (subsequently referred to as social networking websites in this document).

The purpose of this policy is to highlight the responsibilities of employees when accessing and participating on social networking websites.

Scope

The policy applies to all Children Ark employees, volunteers and committee members.

Nursery Equipment

The Children's Ark does not allow its employees, unless a dispensation has been specifically granted for business purposes by the Manager/ Committee in writing, to access social networking websites from any of its equipment, for example, desktop computers, laptop computers, mobile phones, etc at any time.

It is the employee's responsibility not to access or attempt to access such websites on Ark premises.

The Children's Ark reserves the right to monitor an employee's internet usage and websites accessed or attempted to be accessed when using the nursery's equipment. Inappropriate usage will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

** Note the Blackberry Messenger application is an integral part of Blackberry; however use of the service is subject to the Employee Responsibilities detailed below.*

Personal Equipment

The Children's Ark respects an employee's right to engage in social networking. Employees are responsible for their actions and the resultant consequences.

Employee's Responsibilities

When using social networking websites employees:

- Should consider not identifying their workplace in their profile.
- Must not conduct themselves in a way that defames The Children's Ark, its employees or brings them into disrepute.
- Must not make derogatory or abusive comments about The Children's Ark, its customers or suppliers.
- Must not damage The Children's Ark reputation and relationship with customers or suppliers.
- Must not allow their interaction on such websites to damage working relationships with other employees through bullying, harassment or making discriminatory, derogatory or abusive comments.
- Must not divulge information which is confidential about The Children's Ark, their employees, customers or suppliers.
- Must not engage in conversation with other families or other people linked to the Ark about The Children's Ark, even if the subject seems harmless. Refer the person to the Ark's manager.

Security

Employees should be aware that social networking websites are public forums and should not assume that their entries are private.

When signing up to social networking websites employees would familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions and the default security settings.

Identity Theft

Employees should be security conscious and should take steps to protect themselves from identity theft, for example, by restricting the amount of personal information they give out.

Legal Implications

Employees who make defamatory statements that are published on social networking websites may be legally liable for any damage to the reputation of the individual and / or the Company/ organisation concerned.

In addition, in certain cases, the employer may also be held liable for the acts of employees carried out in the course of their employment. This is known as vicarious liability and allows a claim to be made by a third party against the employer.

Entries made on social networking websites may create documents which the courts can order to be disclosed for use in litigation.

Disciplinary Action

Employees whose conduct breaches this policy may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with The Children's Ark disciplinary procedure up to and including summary dismissal.

This policy was adopted at a staff meeting of The Children's Ark:

Signed..... Print Name.....

Dated.....

And at The Children's Ark committee meeting:

Signed by chairperson..... Print Name.....

Dated.....

Date of review.....