

# Low Farm Therapy Centre Mobile Phone and Social Media Policy

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*Written: October 2015 by Ruth Lo*

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## **Aims:**

To provide an environment in which all children, parents and staff are safe.

To have a clear policy on the acceptable use of mobile phones and social networks that is understood and adhered to by all parties.

*NB. In this document the word 'staff' covers all staff, including permanent, temporary, volunteers and students. The word 'parents' covers all parents and carers.*

## **Acceptable use of mobile phones:**

Low Farm Therapy Centre (hereafter known as the Centre) accepts that staff will bring their mobile phones to work for their own use. Personal cameras should not be brought to work.

Users bringing mobile phones into the setting must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device.

Staff are not permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones for the purpose of taking photographs or videoing children.

Staff should ensure that mobile phones are kept in the staff area or office. Mobile phones should not be taken into areas where children are present.

Mobile phone calls and texts should be sent during staff members' own time or break. At these times the phones should be used in the staff area, office, or unoccupied outside area.

If a staff member has a family emergency or similar and needs their phone at hand they must seek the Head of Centre's permission. Permission may also be given to use the Centre phone in these circumstances.

*The only exception to these rules are:*

Staff members may take their mobile phone on any trips for use in case of emergency (if they are not the holder of the Centre mobile phone)

Staff members may take their phone if asked to help with looking for a lost child (see Lost and Uncollected Child Policy).

*However in both the above scenarios:*

The phone must only be used for contacting other staff on the trip or the main office and/or in the case of an emergency.

Staff must not make or receive personal calls, send texts, or use APPs or the internet as this may distract them from their role.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones for taking photographs or video of children on outings.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be vigilant and report any concerns regarding mobile phone use to the Head of Centre.

Concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately (see Whistle Blowing Policy)

The Senior Management reserve the right to check any staff members mobile phone should there be cause for concern over the appropriate use of it. Should inappropriate material be found The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted immediately and their guidance will be followed.

Parent/carers are asked not to use their mobile phones on the premises.

For special events, such as a concert/performance, all parents will need to be in agreement for mobile phones or other recording equipment to be used. If this is the case, parents will be asked to not add pictures or footage of children other than their own to the internet.

Visitors are asked to leave their mobile phones in the office or staff area.

### **Acceptable use of social networks:**

#### *Low Farm Facebook Page*

Low Farm Therapy Centre has a Facebook page which is managed and updated by the identified administration team.

This is used to:

- Promote the work of the Centre.
- Promote certain events such as training or social occasions
- Share research and articles relating to the work of the Centre
- Share activities and news

Photographs and video of children will only be uploaded if parents provide permission for this in writing. These will be taken on the Centre's own devices only.

The page administrators reserve the right to remove any comments at any time. The intent of the policy is to protect the privacy and rights of the Centre, staff & families.

We will remove any postings that:

- Name specific individuals in a negative way
- Are abusive or contain inappropriate language or statements
- Use defamatory, abusive or generally negative terms about any individual or group
- Do not show proper consideration for others privacy
- Breach copyright or fair use laws
- Contain any photos of children without necessary parental consent.

Concerns about posts or comments should be reported to a member of staff.

## *Social Media*

The phrase 'Social Media' includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies:

- Social networking sites e.g Facebook, Twitter, MySpace
- Blogs
- Discussion forums
- Collaborative online spaces
- Media sharing services e.g You Tube

In order to maintain the privacy and security of all staff, parents and children:

- All staff are reminded that any social networking account must have the highest security settings (where only friends, not the public, can see it) and that their profile picture must be appropriate.
- Staff are aware that working with children could make them a target for people that groom individuals online and that they must be vigilant regarding this.
- Staff should not post or tweet specifically about any of the children attending the Centre on social media sites.
- No staff member is allowed to set up an account on a social network site on behalf of the Centre without the permission of the Head of Centre.
- Staff must not make discriminatory, derogatory or untrue comments about the Centre, the children, parents/carers, or other staff members.
- Staff must avoid writing indirect suggestive comments about the Centre e.g. "I've had a bad day at work".
- In order to maintain professional boundaries staff should not accept personal invitations to be friends from parent/carers of children at the Centre, unless they know them in a personal capacity.
- Any breaches of the Mobile Phone & Social Networking policy could result in disciplinary action.

Low Farm Therapy Centre would like parents to work alongside the Centre to maintain the privacy and security of all staff, children and other parents. The Centre therefore requires that parents:

- Demonstrate courtesy and respect for the Centre, staff, other parents and children when posts and comments are placed on social media sites.
- Address any issues or concerns regarding the Centre directly with the Head of Centre.
- Not use social media sites to make derogatory comments or to post photographs which could bring others involved with the Centre into disrepute, including making comments about children, parents and staff members.
- Not comment on, or post photographs of, other people's children on social network sites.