

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES POLICY**

As an ever increasing range of new technologies are embedded in our day to day lives, numerous opportunities exist to incorporate these into learning to enhance teaching and learning opportunities. These new technologies not only provide access to materials and resources, but have the potential to create connections with learning environments and communities around the world in ways that have never been available in the past. Although this opens up a huge range of possibilities, it also presents a number of challenges related to boundaries between practitioners and children.

### **Use of Electronic Communications**

Online communications incorporate a variety of software, applications (including those running on mobile devices), e-mail and the Internet. All of these enable users to interact, create, access and exchange information online, and are an integral part of day to day learning. Angus Council has a duty to protect all children using online communications during the school day.

### **Internet**

Significant educational benefits for children working in all curricular areas can be gained through use of the Internet. This can involve access to world-wide information, the development of skills for learning, life and work and the promotion of key skills in literacy and numeracy. Internet use needs to be well planned, task orientated and take place within a regulated and managed environment. Staff should manage the use of equipment used to search the Internet. This can only be achieved by allowing children to undertake Internet searches supervised.

Internet safety is promoted in all Angus educational settings. Settings need to recognise the importance of ensuring effective communication and developing effective partnerships with key stakeholders, including children, young people, staff, parents and appropriate agencies in promoting safe use of the Internet.

All staff should be highly aware that unmediated Internet access has the potential to place children's and indeed staff themselves in embarrassing, inappropriate and even dangerous situations.

Internet safety depends on staff, settings, parents and, where appropriate, the children themselves taking responsibility for the use of Internet and associated communication technologies. The balance between education for responsible use, regulation and technical solutions, needs to be assessed carefully. Children should be provided with guidance, reinforced by procedures and appropriate rules, which are prominently displayed. This information will help them make responsible decisions.

Clear locally agreed strategies to help ensure responsible and appropriate [be safe on the Internet](#) behaviours have been formulated. They are based on limiting access, developing responsibility and on guiding children towards educational activities. The effectiveness of these strategies should be monitored regularly within settings and all staff, parents and children should remain vigilant.

## **E-mail**

All staff are provided with school e-mail accounts and mailboxes for their individual use. There is clear guidance for staff to ensure a high level of security with their online communications. [Angus Council's Internet and E-mail policy](#) framework outlines this fully.

All staff are issued with a generic password which they have to change to a unique personal network password. Clear guidance is given to these individuals to ensure full understanding of the need for confidentiality relating to unique personal network passwords.

The younger pupils in Angus schools and pre-school classes are issued with generic passwords which are maintained until they reach Primary 4.

## **Use of Social Media**

Technology has become ever-present in our lives and is used as an increasingly essential tool. From e-mail to text and from blogging to tweets, these new technologies have opened up a wide range of possibilities to support children in their learning and adults in their teaching.

The ability to communicate in real time with others and access networks across the world provides a wealth of opportunities for practitioners. It also presents challenge and due attention must be paid to ensure clarity of boundaries between practitioners and children. Clear guidance is given to all Angus Council staff as part of its Corporate Policy [Personnel Advisory Bulletin No 61, Use of Social Media](#).

## **Facebook and Twitter**

Facebook accounts are not yet encouraged for individual settings. However, it is possible to view and post comments on non-school related Facebook pages created by other organisations from within schools and educational establishments.

All settings can request a Twitter account to be set up. This can be accessed through the [Personnel Advisory Bulletin No 61, Use of Social Media](#) document. The document contains a link to a 'Business Case for Social Media Account' template. This completed pro forma should be submitted to the settings nominated senior manager within the People Directorate for initial approval. It should then be forwarded to the Council's Public Relations Manager for final approval.

## **Professional Conduct and Vulnerability**

All practitioners must abide by their regulatory bodies codes of practice/conduct (SSSC or GTCS)

In any communication with parents/carers/children staff must ensure they maintain a formal, courteous and professional tone and maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Staff should also ensure that they operate online in a way which will not call their professional integrity or intentions into question.

All staff should be aware of the security settings of the technology being used and have knowledge of those able to access any information posted. Staff must not discuss children, colleagues, parents or carers online or criticise their employer or others within the school community.

It is recognised that practitioners can be vulnerable to unintended misuse of electronic communication and social media. The potential for innocent actions to be misconstrued due to the casual dialogue encouraged by the use of texting and social media should not be underestimated. To minimise the risks associated with this, practitioners should never share information with children/parents/carers in any environment, electronic or otherwise, that would not be deemed appropriate to share within the setting.

## **Privacy and Security**

To help maintain a level of security with their online communications it is advised that staff only use official channels of communication when discussing work related matters e.g. National Education Intranet "Glow" and Council provided e-mail addresses.

At no time should a member of staff exchange private text, phone numbers, personal e-mail addresses or photographs with children/parents/carers. They should also avoid any 'friend' requests to or from children/parents/carers within social media sites. If these requests come from parents, then staff should use their own discretion in response to these. However, it may be more prudent to decline these invitations and remind parents of more formal channels which they can use to discuss their children's education.

All staff are required to maintain adequate security settings on their data. They should regularly review their privacy settings particularly in regard to photographs. These settings should prohibit others from tagging them in any photographs or updates without their permission and also ask others to remove any undesirable content related to them.

All electronic communication devices used by staff should be protected with a PIN, especially when in work, to protect access to content and prevent potential misuse.

## **Cyber Bullying and Minimising Risk**

Cyber Bullying can take many forms including harassment, discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, sex, or disability. Any member of staff who is the victim of cyber bullying or is uncomfortable with comments, photos or posts made by children/parents/carers or colleagues of or about them or the setting should bring the matter to the attention of management. Care should be taken to avoid making defamatory remarks about another person as this could result in legal action.

If any staff member is made aware of inappropriate use of electronic communication or social networking by a child/parent/carer or concerning a child/parent/carer they should report the matter to their line manager using the agreed procedures in place.

Children using electronic communication and social media sites out with should be made aware of the implications of uploading any inappropriate text or images of staff or other individuals to sites such as YouTube or Facebook. Staff should report such matters to their line manager using the agreed procedures in place.

Staff should alert children/parents/carers to and encourage them to use appropriate and safe online behaviour (see Angus Council's [Be Safe on the Internet](#) leaflet for further guidance).

## **Misuse of Social Media by Parents/Carers or other persons**

If any parent/carer or other person has placed or intends to place inappropriate comments about the setting, other children or members of staff on social media websites such as Facebook or Twitter, the setting should communicate immediately with parents/carers ([Appendix A](#)). The individual should be contacted directly by management and asked to remove the comment immediately. He/she should also be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the issues. If the parent/carer or other person refuses to remove/withdraw the comments from the Social Media site, the manager should issue a further letter ([Appendix B](#)). If no action is taken as a result of this, the matter should be referred to the school's nominated senior manager within the People Directorate.

## **Use of YouTube and other video streaming/video hosting website**

Many excellent educational resources are now being hosted on YouTube, a video streaming website. These short video clips are successfully used in the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence to enhance learning and teaching across all curriculum areas. All staff have full access to YouTube from any setting PC, Laptop or Netbook.

Children should not be given direct access to YouTube.

## **YouTube**

The Angus Council [E-mail and Internet Policy](#) rules will apply to all staff using these resources and it is the responsibility of individual staff to ensure the use of the YouTube website is appropriate.

Where video clips are used to enhance a lesson, staff should have viewed it in its entirety prior to the start of any lesson to verify the clip is of suitable quality and appropriate content for the children.

When showing a video clip to children, the video window should be set to full screen mode to avoid other content e.g. adverts appearing on screen.

YouTube has been added to the list of approved websites in the web filtering software and all usage is recorded.

### **Use of Mobile Phones and similar Mobile Devices**

During the day the use of mobile phones or similar mobile devices will not normally be permitted on the floor.

Mobile devices are generally not secure and should not under any circumstances be used to store or transmit work or records which contains personal information relating to any child or member of staff.

Staff wishing to bring personal mobile phones and tablet devices to work are required to be aware of the following conditions:

- Angus Council will accept no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile devices brought into schools which are owned by staff
- Staff who use mobile devices must ensure that the Data Protection Act 1998 Guidelines are followed and that no personal data relating to staff or children is stored/held on an unencrypted device
- Staff using mobile devices irresponsibly to cause harm directly or indirectly to another person or the reputation of the setting may face disciplinary action
- Staff attempting to use mobile devices to access inappropriate materials/websites via the corporate network may face disciplinary action

### **Misuse of Mobile Phones or Similar Devices**

All staff should be made aware that the misuse of a mobile phone/device is an offence under the Communications Act 2003, if it involves a call or message that is grossly offensive or is of an indecent, obscene or menacing character, and, the distribution of certain pornography is an offence under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

### **Inappropriate Text or Images**

Where there is inappropriate text or images found on a mobile phone or other mobile device and the text or image is uploaded on sites such as YouTube or Facebook, the staff member should be asked to immediately remove these.

If there is a concern that text or image(s) stored on a mobile phone or other mobile device, may be inflammatory, inappropriate or illegal then management should confiscate the phone/device. The [Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures](#) should be reviewed and contact made with the settings nominated senior manager within the People Directorate. Under advisement, the manager should contact Tayside Police.

### **Use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)**

Where CCTV is use an agreed code of practice must be adhered to. This includes:

- carefully planning the siting of cameras
- arrangements for access to and disclosure of images
- monitoring compliance and security arrangements.

The requirements of this code can be found at [CCTV Code of Practice](#).

### **Use of Cameras, Video Cameras and Webcams**

During the day the use of photographic equipment such as videos or still image cameras will not normally be permitted anywhere on the premises unless as a part of a practitioner-led lesson.

All parents and carers are required to complete a consent pro forma ([Appendix C](#)) enabling permission for staff to take still images and video recordings of their children. This consent form also seeks permission to allow images and videos to be used in publications for educational purposes.

Images of children or young people (up to the age of 18) must not appear in any publication or website without explicit parental consent in writing.

It should be noted that once a parent/carer has given consent, this will be valid for the period of time the pupil is on the school roll.

### **Educational Use**

Settings are increasingly using still image cameras and video in learning and teaching and to share information with parents. For example, photographic evidence of a child's achievement may be stored in children's learning logs or folios. Where settings use technology in this way, parents must be asked for consent (as above).

### **Performances**

It is important that setting performances should be enjoyable and worthwhile. Children and staff will have worked hard to prepare for the production and it is important the experience is not disrupted by movement in the audience, flashes etc. Similarly, some parents/carers and relatives may also wish to keep a record of the performance.

Under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* an individual is permitted to make a video record of such a performance *for their own personal use*. Moreover, staff may make and keep a similar recording of the performance for the record or for the purposes of formative assessment. (Arrangements for licensing video recordings for other purposes are detailed in the Angus Council Education Admin Manual, [Section 2.](#))

To ensure that neither the performance nor the audience is disrupted or inconvenienced, the use of videos and cameras must be carefully controlled. Accordingly, anyone wishing to record all or part of a production (for personal domestic use) must seek permission from management well in advance. The setting should ensure a record is maintained of those to whom permission has been granted.

Settings may be able to accommodate such requests by offering seats in the back row (to avoid disrupting other members of the audience) or other appropriate arrangements. Alternatively, settings may wish to take advantage of a Limited Availability Product Licence (LAPL) available from the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS), which enables, with limitations, productions etc. to be recorded and sold (more information on this facility is available from the Educational Development Service).

## **Trips**

While it will be possible for individuals to take photographs or make videos on trips, these should be appropriate in nature. Any images taken should not be shared without the permission of the individual concerned.

## **Use of Webcams**

The regulations for using webcams are similar to those for CCTV (closed-circuit television). The area in which the webcam is located must be well signposted so that people know about it before they enter that area. This equates to seeking individual consent.

Signage should clearly explain

- why the webcam is there
- what images will be used for, and
- who might look at the pictures

Any educational establishment intending to use a webcam must ensure appropriate signage is in place.

## **FURTHER ADVICE**

Anyone seeking additional information/advice should, in the first instance, contact the Education ICT Manager on (01307) 476220.

## References to other Council or National Policies

[PERSONNEL ADVISORY BULLETIN NO 61: USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA](#) (Angus Council)  
[GTC Scotland guidelines for teachers on the use of electronic communication and social media](#)  
[EIS Social networks advice for teaching staff](#)  
[The Computer Misuse Act 1990](#)  
[Scotland's Child Internet Safety Action Plan](#)  
[Defamation Act 1996](#)  
[Data Protection Act 1998](#)  
[Angus Council E-mail and Internet Usage Policy](#)  
[Communications Act 2003](#)  
[Safe and Well \(2005\)](#); (Scottish Government publication)  
<http://ceop.police.uk/Documents/Webcam%20fact%20sheet%202.pdf>  
 (CEOP stay safe on screen: How to chat on a webcam with confidence)

The following websites give useful information about the safe and responsible use of mobile devices:

[Guidance on Developing Policies to Promote the Safe and Responsible Use of Mobile Technology in Schools](#)  
<http://highlandesafety.wordpress.com/?s=mobile+phone+safety+advice>  
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/ISRU-News/young-people/>  
[http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11\\_16/control/](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_16/control/)  
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/ISRU-News/games-andmobile/mobile-devices-and-the-law/>

**This policy will be monitored by / through:** annual review of policy

This policy will be reviewed in:	12 months
Review Date:	August 2024
Reviewed By:	Management



DATE

Dear Parent/Carer

## SOCIAL NETWORKING

As you are probably aware, in recent years, there has been a significant growth in the use of social media, including Facebook and Twitter. It is important when using such sites to consider the implications your comments may have on others. It has been brought to my attention that some negative comments have been made on Facebook by some parents about the setting and/or a staff member (*delete as appropriate*).

I would encourage parents who have any concerns about their child's education to approach me directly, rather than make comments through a Social Networking site. Statements made in a public forum such as Facebook can cause upset and harm to others, whether intended or not.

As you are aware, we try hard to work in partnership with our parents for the benefit of the children in our setting. I believe that criticism of the setting and/or a staff member (*delete as appropriate*) on Facebook is unhelpful and does not follow the guidance outlined in Angus Council's Parental Rights and Responsibilities Leaflet: <http://www.angus.gov.uk/atoz/pdfs/ednleaflets/pupilrights.pdf>

I would ask parents who have any concerns about their child's well-being or education to contact me in the first instance.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours faithfully

DATE

Dear Parent/Carer

## SOCIAL NETWORKING

As you are probably aware, in recent years, there has been a significant growth in the use of social media, including Facebook and Twitter. It is important when using such sites to consider the implications your comments may have on others. It has been brought to my attention that you have made some inaccurate/malicious/aggressive/threatening comments on Facebook about the setting and/or a staff member (*delete as appropriate*).

If you have any concerns about your child's education, I would ask you to approach me directly, rather than make comments through a Social Networking site. Statements made in a public forum such as Facebook can cause upset and harm to others, whether intended or not. I would ask you in the first instance to remove the comments from the public forum as soon as possible. Should you not remove the malicious/aggressive/threatening (*delete as appropriate*) comments, one of my options may be to contact the Strategic Director - People and other agencies.

As you are aware, we try hard to work in partnership with our parents for the benefit of the children in our setting. I believe that criticism of the setting and/or a staff member (*delete as appropriate*) on Facebook is unhelpful and does not follow the guidance outlined in Angus Council's Parental Rights and Responsibilities Leaflet: <http://www.angus.gov.uk/atoz/pdfs/ednleaflets/pupilrights.pdf>

I would ask parents who have any concerns about their child's well-being or education to contact me in the first instance.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours faithfully

Forfar Early Learning  
and Childcare Centre



## ANGUS COUNCIL – PEOPLE DIRECTORATE

### USE OF IMAGES AND MOBILE DEVICES (Tablets and Phones) – PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

- Use of children's images in Early Learning and Childcare Centre literature and website
- Use of personal mobile devices/phones in
- S Q A Regulations

**Parent/Carer (please print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

Occasionally, we may take photographs of the children at our centre. We may use these images in our handbook or in other printed publications that we produce, as well as on our website. We may also make video recordings for educational use.

From time to time, our centre may be visited by the media who will take photographs or film footage of a visiting dignitary or other high-profile event. Children may appear in these images which may be used in local newspapers or, in certain circumstances, on television. To comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, we need your permission before we can photograph or make any recordings of your child.

As outlined in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 an individual parent/carer **is permitted** to take photographs and make a video recording from a performance or event **for their own personal use**.

However, we would **recommend** you refrain from uploading any images and/or video clips into personal Facebook accounts and/or any other forms of Social Media whatever form these may take. Such photographs and video clips(s) may contain images of other children taking part in the performance or sports event for whom permission may not have been granted. If such images were to be uploaded into sites such as Facebook, the images/videos could be accessible by countless 'friends' or others who may be able to access the site(s). Unfortunately, in addition to copyright issues, this may have the undesired consequence of putting certain children at risk, which obviously no-one wishes to happen.

The widespread ownership of mobile devices requires that the People Directorate, managers, staff, children, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile devices are used responsibly in our centre. This consent form is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile devices can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile devices provide (such as increased safety and greater learning opportunities) can continue to be enjoyed by our children.

**Please answer all questions below, then sign and date the form where shown.**

*Please circle your answer*

- |           |  |            |           |
|-----------|--|------------|-----------|
| <b>1</b>  | May we use your child's photograph in the centre handbook and other printed publications that we produce?  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| <b>2</b>  | May we record your child's image on digital camera/video/tablet as part of early learning experiences?   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| <b>3a</b> | May we use your child's image/photograph showing centre activities on our website? (it is policy where images are used, names will not be provided)  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| <b>3b</b> | May we use your child's image/photograph showing learning activities on our Forfar ELCC social media networking channels? (it is policy where images are used, names will not be provided) | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| <b>4</b>  | Are you happy for your child or his/her photograph to appear in the media or on websites which have been approved by the centre showing learning activities?                               | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| <b>5</b>  | Would you allow your child to take part in video conferencing as part of centre activities?  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| <b>6</b>  | May we store your child's photograph on our centre database? (these photographs are taken by a reputable photographer or in some cases by school staff)                                    | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |

**PLEASE NOTE that by signing this form you are agreeing to the following:**

the council/Early Years Centre shall accept **no** responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile devices which are owned by children brought into the centre

**Parent/Carer Signature:**

---

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes**

- We will not use the personal details or full names (which means first name **and** surname) of any child or adult in a photographic image on video, on our website or in any of our printed publications.
- We will not include personal e-mail, postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers on video, on our website or in printed publications.
- We may use group or centre photographs or footage with very general labels, such as "A Science Lesson" at the ELCC.
- For further information, please refer to the Council's Full Privacy Statement and the Schools and Learning Privacy Statement
- [https://www.angus.gov.uk/council\\_and\\_democracy/council\\_information/information\\_governance/angus\\_council\\_full\\_privacy](https://www.angus.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/information_governance/angus_council_full_privacy)
- [https://www.angus.gov.uk/council\\_and\\_democracy/council\\_information/information\\_governance/council\\_and\\_services\\_privacy\\_statements/schools\\_and\\_learning\\_privacy\\_statement](https://www.angus.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/information_governance/council_and_services_privacy_statements/schools_and_learning_privacy_statement)