

ICT Safe use Policy

Safe use of Information Communication Technology

“Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage [and beyond], children need opportunities to explore information, communication technology (ICT) in a range of meaningful contexts to support their learning, particularly where this reflects their interests and preferred learning style. Practitioners will support children in using ICT resources appropriately, helping them to make sense of the world around them in a range of real situations. Practitioners also find that using photographs, tape and video recording can be helpful to document children’s learning and development, and is an accessible way of sharing observations with children and their parents. In addition, children and parents can be actively involved themselves in the ongoing observation and assessment process by using ICT equipment to capture special moments which celebrate achievements and identify children’s fascinations. This adds a rich layer to the wealth of information that practitioners gather about learning and development, and will help shape decisions about what needs to be provided in the future to ensure children make the progress they are capable of, within a safe e-learning environment.

‘Our challenge, therefore, is to MINIMISE risks whilst MAXIMISING opportunities.’ Paterson (2010)

ICT Resources currently used to record and access information in the nursery environment include:

Interactive Whiteboard

Computer

iPad

iPod

Academy Mobile Phones

Digital Camera

The use of Mobile Phones in Nursery

Mobile phone technology has become more sophisticated over recent years and will continue to evolve. Wireless connections in particular are to extend the capabilities of mobile phones further; which will allow access to new content and services, such as the internet, social networking sites and instant messaging. Many mobile phones offer camera, video and audio recording as standard.

The aim of this policy is to protect children and young people from harm, by ensuring the appropriate management and use of mobile phones by all individuals who are to come into contact with our early years setting. This is to be achieved through balancing protection and potential misuse. It is therefore to be recognised that alongside the potential risks, mobile phones continue to be effective communication tools. This in turn is to contribute to safeguarding practice and protection.

This policy will apply to all individuals who are to have access to and/or be users of personal and/or work-related mobile phones within the broadest context of the setting environment. This will include

children and young people, parents and carers, early year's practitioners and their managers, volunteers, students, committee members, visitors, contractors and community users.

Acceptable use and management of mobile phones within nursery is therefore agreed by all users. There is to be a clear expectation that the personal use of mobile phones is to be limited to specific times and uses as agreed with the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Within the nursery all staff have safe and secure storage facilities to store personal belongings including personal mobile phones.

All service users, including parents, carers, visitors and contractors should be respectfully advised that their mobile phones are not to be used in designated mobile use free areas. Should it be considered necessary for mobile phone calls and/or texts to be taken or made, efforts should be made to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or disruption to children. Under no circumstances are images, video or audio recordings to be made without prior consent by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

All individuals who are to bring personal devices into the early years setting must ensure that they hold no inappropriate or illegal content.

It is to be recognised that mobile phones provide direct contact to others, and will often provide necessary reassurances due to their ease of access, particularly at difficult times. Agreed acceptable use of mobile phones is to therefore be promoted. This is to afford practitioners peace of mind by reducing stress and worry and therefore allow them to concentrate more fully on their work. Any authorised use of mobile phones within nursery is to be monitored; mobile phones will be stored in the kitchen area only. Such use must be subject to management, monitoring and review.

All staff have signed up to abide by Unity Academy's Mobile Phone policy, this considers personal use of work mobile phones and the safety of students throughout the academy.

Internet Access within Nursery

Our Internet Policy aims to outline safe and effective practice in the use of the internet, it provides advice on acceptable use and effective control measures to enable children, young people and adults to use ICT resources in a safer online environment

The internet should be considered part of everyday life with children and young people seen to be at the forefront of this online generation. Knowledge and experience of information and communication technology (ICT) should be considered an essential life skill. Developmentally appropriate access to computers and the internet in the early years will significantly contribute to children and young people's enjoyment of learning and development. Children and young people will learn most effectively where they are to be given managed access to computers and control of their own learning experiences; however, such a use will carry an element of risk. Our early year's practitioners and managers, consider it to be their duty to make children and young people aware of the potential risks associated with online technologies. This will empower them with the knowledge and skills to keep safe, without limiting their learning opportunities and experiences.

Maintaining password security is to be an essential requirement for early years practitioners and managers particularly where they are to have access to sensitive information. A list of authorised ICT users is to be maintained, and access to sensitive and personal data is to be restricted.

Early years practitioners and managers will be responsible for keeping their passwords secure. Sharing passwords is not to be considered secure practice. Where children and young people are to be enabled to create their own password however, a copy of such will be kept on file for reference. All ICT users must 'log out' of their accounts should they need to leave a computer unattended. If ICT users become aware that password security has been compromised or has been shared, either intentionally or unintentionally, the concern must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and ICT Manager.

It is considered essential practice that internet access for all ICT users will be managed and moderated in order to protect them from deliberate or intentional misuse. Every reasonable precaution will be taken to ensure the safe use of the internet. It has to be acknowledged however, that it will be impossible to safeguard against every eventuality.

The following control measures are in place which will manage internet access and minimise risk:

- Secure broadband and wireless access.
- A secure, filtered, managed internet service provider and learning platform.
- Secure email accounts.
- Regularly monitored and updated virus protection.
- A secure password system.
- An agreed list of assigned authorised users with controlled access.

Our computer is sited in an area of high visibility which will enable children, young people and adults to be closely supervised and their online use to be appropriately monitored within nursery.

Should children, young people or adults discover any potentially unsafe or inappropriate material, they are to hide the content from view. For example, the window will be minimised and/or the monitor (not computer) will be turned off. All such incidents must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and ICT Manager; who will ensure a report of the incident is to be made and will take any further actions which are to be deemed necessary.

All users are to be responsible for reporting any concerns encountered using online technologies to the Designated Safeguarding Officer and ICT Manager.

Online Communications

In line with, 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People' it will not be considered appropriate for early years practitioners or their managers to engage in personal online communications with children and young people, parents or carers.

Communications between children and adults by whatever method should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Early years practitioners and managers should not share any personal information with any child or young person associated with the early years setting. They should not request or respond to any personal information from the child or young person other than that might be considered appropriate as part of their professional role. Early years practitioners and managers will ensure that all communications are to be transparent and open to scrutiny.

Where children and young people are to access online communications and communities, it will be considered best practice for them to adopt a nickname which will protect their identity and ensure anonymity.

It is to be recognised that early years practitioners and managers are also likely to use social networking sites in their recreational time on their own personal computers. This form of activity is not to be discouraged however early years practitioners are encouraged to agree and adhere to the 'professional conduct agreement'. It must be ensured that the use of such sites will not compromise professional integrity or bring the early years setting into disrepute. The adding of children and young people, parents and carers as 'friends' to a social networking site should be avoided.

Based on the principles in the document Online Safety: A Toolkit for Early Years Settings (Plymouth EYT, 2011)

The complaints procedure

If there is a concern regarding the implementation of this policy in the first instance please follow the complaints policy.

Monitoring and Evaluating the policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislative changes or circumstances deem it necessary.