

Social Media Policy for organisations working with young people and children *(pro forma, to be adapted to be specific)*

It is good practice for all staff, including freelancers, visiting artists and chaperones, to undertake all of their personal online social media activity within private settings to avoid children and young people being able to view personal, public social media pages, therefore potentially blurring boundaries of the professional roles between staff and children and young people.

If a child contacts a member of staff's *personal* social media account via private messaging, the member of staff should report this to a line manager who will follow up to ensure no further private messaging takes place. On no occasion should any member of staff engage in private messaging with a child from their personal social media accounts.

It is acceptable for a member of staff to set up a 'professional' social media account separate from their 'personal' account. This *professional* account could be used to communicate with a particular social media group, for example a youth theatre social media group, as long as the staff member did not use their professional social media account for personal purposes or to engage in inappropriate conduct, and that the account name and password of the social media account, social media group and communication with individuals of that group were accessible to other relevant staff member

Staff should not offer out, or accept requests to communicate with children on any online social networking platform unless:

- i. *It is being using for expressly professional reasons, that it contains no personal and/or inappropriate material, and that it can be openly accessed by other staff members.*
- ii. *With regards Facebook, it is policy that if a class or group wish to communicate via Facebook that they create a Facebook Page (not a Group) to do this. Persons working with young people should not for any reason 'friend' them on Facebook.*
- iii. *If an employee is working with young people with whom they are already 'friends' with on Facebook (for example through family friendships) this must be disclosed to their Line Manager as soon as possible.*

When setting up a social media page for participants and staff (such as a Facebook page for a class) the following must be adhered to:

- i. *Parents or Guardians of participants must be informed if there is to be a social networking site for that class/project.*
- ii. *Only young people age 13 and over (and therefore groups where all participants are 13 and over) should create a social media page. Do not target or accept invites from those under the minimum age of 13.*
- iii. *Only invite/accept requests from young people from that class or project.*
- iv. *All contact with young people through Social Media sites should be kept appropriate and not use abbreviations/language that could be misconstrued by the young person, parent or guardian (e.g. "txt spk" such as LOL; OMG etc and smilies).*

- v. *It is recommended that staff do not use their social media work accounts after 10pm in order to maintain a safe boundary between work and personal life.*
- vi. *Use care in sharing any imagery including children (do not name them, or tag them, or specify a location where they regularly are located, only share images if the child/parents has given prior consent to being photographed or filmed).*
- vii. *Remind all users to protect their own privacy and ensure they understand the risks in posting and sharing content, and tagging themselves and others, which might subsequently damage their reputation*
- viii. *Ask all to think before they post, ensuring that content is appropriate to safeguarding policies and appropriate for readership.*
- ix. *Promote a culture of safety and responsible social networking and provide information to support children to use social networks safely as and when is necessary.*
- x. *Be aware of data protection considerations for all users.*
- xi. *Be vigilant for fake profiles which seek to gain the trust of children and the vulnerable.*