Next Steps Pre-school, Elms Vale, Church Road, Dover, CT17 9LW
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Registered Charity No. 1156391

Mobile Phone, Camera, iPad Use and E-safety Policy

Use of personal phones under the revised Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2026

The pre-school accepts that employees will bring their mobile phones to work. Employees are not permitted to have their phones on the setting floor; all mobile phones must be kept in staff members' bags in the designated area (staff lockers).

If an employee needs to be contacted urgently during working hours, staff are asked to give the setting's telephone number to the relevant people, ensuring that calls are only received when necessary. In an emergency, personal mobile phones may be used in the privacy of the office with the manager's permission.

Members of staff will not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs of children on outings.

Staff are not permitted to use the recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example to take photographs or videos of children at the pre-school.

Anyone found to be storing pictures on their mobile phone, or using their mobile phone when not on a designated break, may be liable to disciplinary action.

Parents/carers may not use their phones when coming into the pre-school setting.

An exception may be made if a visitor's company or organisation operates a lone working policy that requires them to contact their office periodically throughout the day. Visitors will be shown to a quiet space, away from the children, where they can use their mobile phone.

Cameras and videos

- Members of staff must not bring their own cameras or video recorders into the setting.
- Photographs and recordings of children are only taken for valid reasons, i.e. to record their learning and development, or for displays within the setting.
- Photographs or recordings of children are only taken on equipment belonging to the setting.
- Camera and video use is monitored by the setting manager, including on special occasions such as plays. Parents may bring in their own camera or video recorder, provided there are no objections from other parents/carers and the photographs are for their own record of their child and are not copied or shared outside their family circle.

- Where parents request permission to photograph or record their own children at special events, permission will first be obtained from all parents for their children to be included.
- Photographs and recordings are only taken of children if there is written permission to do so (found on the individual child's registration form).

Computers and electronic communications

Email and internet use

The early years setting encourages its employees to use email and the internet at work, for work-related business only, where this can save time and expense. However, employees must ensure that their communication is well structured and professional, just as if a letter were being sent.

If you are unsure whether something you propose to do might breach this email and internet guidance, you should seek advice from your line manager.

Personal blogs

The setting recognises that, in your own time and on non-work computers, you are free to set up personal weblogs ('blogs') on the internet, provided that they do not breach the law, disclose any of the early years setting's confidential information, breach copyright, defame the setting or its suppliers, parents/carers or employees, bring the setting into disrepute, or disclose personal data or information about any individual in breach of data protection law (the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018).

Social networking websites

The early years setting respects employees' right to a private life. However, the early years setting must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. It therefore requires that, if you use social networking websites, you:

- refrain from identifying yourself as working for the early years setting;
- ensure that you do not conduct yourself in a way that is detrimental to the early years setting; and
- take care not to allow your interaction on these websites to damage working relationships between employees and service users of the early years setting.

Cyberbullying

The early years setting is committed to ensuring that all its employees are treated with dignity and respect at work. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in the workplace. The early years setting can provide clear guidance on how bullying and harassment can be recognised. Cyberbullying methods could include text messages, mobile phone calls, instant messenger services, circulating photos or video clips, or posting comments on websites, blogs or in chat rooms. Personal blogs that refer to

colleagues without their consent are also unacceptable. Employees who cyberbully a colleague could also face criminal prosecution under various laws, including the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

Photograph, Video and iPad Policy

Every child in our care deserves to be protected from the misuse of photographic and video images of themselves taken whilst they attend the pre-school.

Purpose

It is our policy to use photographs taken in the pre-school to support the children's learning and to record children's individual progress. Photographs taken in the pre-school as part of a normal day are taken using an iPad, a camera or, on occasion, a video camera, and are only taken by members of the staff team.

Additional photographs or images may be taken of children as part of the work of the pre-school, and may be taken by an outside photographer or by other parents (during the Christmas production or any other events the pre-school may hold). Where outside agencies take photographs for marketing purposes, the pre-school will seek written permission from parents for their child to be included. Should a parent prefer their child not to take part, any images taken will be deleted. Individual children will not be included if written permission is not given by the child's family.

Guidelines

Photographs/videos are taken to:

- support each child's learning and individual record;
- illustrate work on display around the pre-school building.

Photographs may also be taken in the following ways:

- Whenever possible, photos taken by outside agencies will be taken so that individual children are difficult to identify, for example from a distance or from behind.

Parents' use of cameras/videos in the pre-school

Parents/carers will be invited to record their child's inclusion in group events at Christmas and other celebrations using photographs or video, on the understanding that they will not publish any material on the internet, as the pre-school has no control over these images once they are in the public domain.

We will ensure that the children of parents/carers who do not wish their child to be photographed or videoed are provided with other activities. At no time

are staff permitted to bring in a camera from home or use their mobile phones in the pre-school.

Use of iPads in the setting

The pre-school uses Tapestry for record keeping, making text-based and photographic records of children's activities, reviewing children's progress and compiling summative assessments.

Data and photographs are uploaded to the Tapestry system by staff using the setting's internet connection. Once evidence has been stored and added to each child's individual file, it can be sent directly to parents by email. A password is sent separately so that parents can access the files.

Data and photographs stored remotely on Tapestry's online servers are protected by industry-standard internet security procedures, including encrypted transmission, passwords, access-device registration and physical protections. The Tapestry system administrator, who has access to the children's data and photographs on a need-to-know basis, has been subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, as have all staff.

Tapestry is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office in accordance with the Data Protection Act, as is the setting.

Parents' consent is obtained regarding their child's learning records and how they are kept. When children leave the pre-school, their files are downloaded and parents can access them for 2 months and 4 weeks, after which they are deleted from the system.

The iPads are stored securely in the setting's locked office. No iPad may be used in the toilet or nappy-changing areas. Staff must handle iPads responsibly as delicate electrical equipment, protecting them from damage and ensuring they pose no physical risk to children in the setting. Observations such as photographs may be taken in the setting and worked on later (after the children have left), linking them to the Early Years Foundation Stage and adding staff comments about their key children and their progress.

Staff must supervise the children at all times. The garden and the middle of the room are higher-risk areas, so staff will not spend time on their iPads when they are in these areas.

Uploading of photos to the internet

Photos stored on the iPads are never uploaded to any part of the internet other than Tapestry. For example, no photo of any child or group of children on an iPad may be emailed, posted on Facebook, posted on X (formerly Twitter) or pinned on Pinterest. Even parents' requests to email photos from an iPad are always refused for security reasons. To ensure that no photos are being uploaded, the email 'sent' list and web history on each iPad are never cleared, so that they can be checked by a manager.

iPad restrictions

All iPads used in the setting have PIN-protected restrictions on web content and apps, set in the iPad's settings. Allowed content is restricted (using UK ratings) as follows: Music & Podcasts are set to 'Clean'; in-app purchases are set to 'Off', with a password required 'Immediately'; and Game Centre multiplayer games and adding friends are set to 'Off'. CHILDREN ARE NOT PERMITTED TO USE IPADS UNSUPERVISED. Internet access in our building is limited to the back room and the office, as the signal is very poor and does not travel through the building.

Safeguarding

All staff have the right to challenge any other member of staff about their iPad use, and are obliged to report any concern immediately to the setting's Safeguarding Officer. At the Safeguarding Officer's discretion, the member of staff concerned may be required to leave the setting immediately and the iPad retained for further investigation. Please see the setting's safeguarding policies.

This policy was adopted in September 2026.

Next review: September 2027.

Signed on behalf of management

Name of signatory: Virginia McCarthy

Role of signatory: Manager