



Use of Information Communication Technology (ICT), AI & Social Media Policy

1. Statement of Purpose

Technology is an integral part of society both within and out with the early learning and childcare (ELC) setting. The use of ICT equipment enables children to understand the role and impact technology has in the wider world and helps develop skills and confidence that can be used in different contexts. The use of ICT is fundamental in all aspects of children's learning. As well as this, safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility, so it is important to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children at all times and this includes their online safety.

"The key to all successful early learning as discussed previously in this guidance are the experiences, interactions, and environments we provide for our children. Rapid developments in digital technologies at home and outside, are everywhere. They are changing our habits and, in some cases, making our lives easier and more enjoyable. Mobile phones; tablets; washing machines; televisions; automatic doors; online shopping and "Smart" homes are a few examples of interactive technologies babies and young children may encounter as they grow. Children can use any resource to promote their learning in at least two different ways. They can learn about a resource, and then use this knowledge to learn with it." (Realising the Ambition – Being Me P78)

Throughout the guidance the term '*parents*' is used to include all main caregivers.

2. Equality of Opportunity

As an ELC setting we aim to be inclusive at all times. All children will have the opportunity to access relevant ICT resources to help develop their own individual skills. Resources should be appropriate to the child's age and stage of development and reflect wider society. Opportunities for staff to develop their skills should be available in order to enhance the learning experience for the children and the setting. We will provide support in relation to the appropriate use of social media, using plain English and parent-friendly language.

3. Children

3.1

Children should participate in a wide range of activities that use ICT whilst attending the setting. The use of ICT includes the use of *any* equipment which allows users (both children and adults) to communicate and manipulate information electronically. Children may use a wide range of equipment including, but not limited to, computers, I-Pads, I-Pods, programmable robots, laptops, digital cameras and listening centres depending on current availability. By experiencing and using different types of ICT, in different contexts, children will be developing a variety of skills across the curriculum at a pace that provides individual challenge and enjoyment.

“Realising the Ambition – Being Me’ The child’s view: Children learn through observations, and their attitudes to digital technologies often mirror their family members’ behaviours. We see gaps in the day filled through the use of digital technologies to keep babies and children occupied. Therefore, babies and young children’s engagement with digital technology does not always result in developing digital literacy skills or result in effective learning. High quality interactions with others is key when learning how to use them; guided interactions from an adult when learning through them; and; when learning about them.” (Realising the Ambition – Being Me P79).

3.2

All early year’s settings have a duty to ensure that children are protected from potential harm, both within and beyond the learning environment and therefore e-safety is a priority for managers. Staff are responsible for ensuring children access only appropriate material and for ensuring that use of materials appropriated from internet sites complies with Copyright Law and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Appropriate filters will be applied to ICT equipment and monitored by staff. Children will not have access to social networking sites or chatrooms.

4. Staff

4.1

Staff should possess the relevant skills and knowledge to support children and the setting in the use of ICT. A range of teaching strategies will be used to help develop these skills. Staff will ensure all equipment is in good working order and any faults should be reported to the head of setting. Resources and software will be reviewed regularly to ensure their effectiveness for the children using them. Children will be shown how to use the equipment and resources safely and staff will monitor time spent by children using ICT.

“Realising the Ambition – Being Me’ “Our role: Digital technologies provide opportunities for us to design a unique learning spaces for the children. Bringing resources and experiences virtually into the setting can lead learning well-beyond what was originally planned, for example, in response to

a children's interest in sharks, digital technology can extend learning through watching how real sharks move under the sea. Children then get a better understanding of size and speed and so on. This helps us draw on children's own knowledge gained at home or outwith the setting to spark possible lines of development and a response to children's own interests." (Realising the Ambition – Being Me P79).

4.2

Staff may use ICT and online journals to gather evidence of children's development and progress to share with parents and strategies should be in place to ensure confidentiality. Internet access will be planned to extend the learning experience and staff will ensure that the internet is accessed responsibly and safely. All registered workers must work to the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers (the Code) and follow the same standards with their online presence as they would in any aspect of their life. (SSSC, Social media guidance for social service workers)

5. Usage and Storage of Photographs and Personal Data

5.1

Specific permission will be sought individually from parents for any photographs or recordings of their child within the setting. This will be sought when the child starts the setting. As a setting we are aware of the [Data Protection Act 2018](#), and the use and storage of materials with people's images and names included on them. Photographs will only be taken on devices provided by the setting and staff are not permitted to use their own personal devices.

5.2

We will follow best practice by ensuring that:

- Written permission will always specify what the photographs may be used for
- Written permission for the use of photographs will be deemed as being valid for a specific period of time.
- Photographs will only be stored on the setting's computers and other electronic devices. Where photographs are stored electronically, all electronic devices will be password secure.
- Paper copies will be used solely for display purposes or as evidence of the child's progress.
- All material with photographic evidence will be stored in a secure place and disposed of appropriately when no longer required.

6. Use of Mobile Phones and Smart Device/Watches

Many ELC settings have a mobile phone solely for the use of the setting to ensure effective communication between the setting and users. Only these phones are acceptable in the playroom. All staff, including **student/volunteers** and all others in the playroom, should ensure all personal phones and smart devices are switched off and understand that it is unacceptable **to respond to personal calls and notifications** whilst working with children. Information regarding the use of mobile phones and smart devices within the setting should be made available to staff during the induction process. Parents or volunteers should access this information through the setting's handbook and/or the noticeboard.

6.1

The SSSC **Codes of Practice** (the Codes) set out:

- the standards of practice and behaviour expected of everyone who works in social services in Scotland.
- the standards expected of employers of social service workers in Scotland.

As a worker, I will not

- Put myself or other people at unnecessary risk.
- Behave, while in or outside work, in a way that would bring my suitability to work in social services into question.

As an employer, I will

- Have written policies and procedures in place to protect individuals, carers, workers, and others from harm.
- Have risk assessment policies and procedures in place.
- Follow the Code of Practice for Social Service Employers and tell workers about my responsibility to comply with it.

6.2

All staff members, students and volunteers working/supporting playrooms must ensure that their mobile telephones/smart devices are left in a designated (i.e. staff room) place during working hours when they have contact with children. These devices must only be used when taking breaks away from the children.

- Emergency contacts should be updated with the settings telephone number if a personal call is required.
- If any staff member has a family emergency that they need keep their phone on hand for then a safe designated place out with the playroom and prior consent with your management team should be agreed.

7. Use of Social Networks

7.1

We recognise that social networking can help settings to engage with parents and staff and can be beneficial in promoting the setting. Many settings use social media to communicate with parents, enabling them to keep up to date with the setting's activities. Staff should be clear about why social media is being used and what the setting is hoping to achieve by using it. Staff members who will have access to the setting's social media accounts should all understand the proper and correct use of these social media accounts. Policies and procedures should be in place for the use of social media. These should be read, understood, and signed by all staff members.

7.2

Staff may use their own social media for personal use only. They must, however, recognise that it is not appropriate to discuss *any* matters relating to children, staff, or the workplace through these networks. A high security level on social networking sites (i.e. pages set to private, with no information on the profile about where the individual is employed) is required for all staff. This should be reviewed regularly.

8. Use of AI

Our setting recognises that Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are increasingly used within education and administration. We are committed to ensuring that any use of AI:

- Enhances outcomes for children
- Upholds children's rights under the UNCRC
- Aligns with the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare
- Reflects the principles of GIRFEC
- Meets expectations within the Care Inspectorate Quality Framework
- Complies fully with UK GDPR and Data Protection legislation

AI will support — not replace — professional knowledge, reflective practice, and practitioner judgement.

8.2

This policy applies to:

- All staff and management
- Students and volunteers

- Any digital platforms used within the setting
- Administrative and curriculum planning activities

Children will not independently access AI systems.

8.3

AI may be used to support:

- Curriculum planning in line with Curriculum for Excellence (Early Level)
- Professional reflection and self-evaluation
- Drafting communications and policies
- Generating ideas for play-based learning
- Translating information for families where appropriate

All AI-generated content must be:

- Reviewed by a qualified practitioner
- Checked for accuracy and bias
- Adapted to reflect the specific needs of children within the setting

Professional judgement always overrides AI-generated content.

8.4

In line with our Child Protection Policy:

- AI will never be used to assess or determine safeguarding concerns.
- AI will not replace observations, well-being assessments, or professional discussions.
- All child protection responsibilities remain with the Designated Child Protection Coordinator.

AI must never be used to store, analyse, or process safeguarding information on public platforms.

8.5

The setting adheres to UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 requirements.

- No identifiable child data will be entered into publicly accessible AI systems.
- Staff must not input names, dates of birth, addresses, or sensitive information into AI tools.
- Only approved, secure platforms may be used where data processing agreements are in place.
- Parents will be informed if AI-supported tools form part of digital learning platforms.

Confidentiality and children's rights to privacy remain paramount.

8.6

We recognise that AI systems may reflect bias. Therefore:

- All outputs will be critically evaluated for inclusivity.
- Content must reflect anti-discriminatory practice.
- AI will not be relied upon for cultural or additional support needs assessments.
- Materials will be adapted to reflect the diverse needs of our families.

8.7

The Manager/Lead Practitioner is responsible for:

- Monitoring AI use within the setting
- Ensuring staff understanding of ethical and safe use
- Reviewing this policy annually
- Ensuring practice aligns with the Care Inspectorate Quality Framework (particularly Quality Indicator 3.1 – Safeguarding and Child Protection, and 4.3 – Leadership of Improvement)

AI use will be included in ongoing self-evaluation processes.

8.8

All staff must:

- Use AI only for professional purposes
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Apply critical professional judgement
- Report any concerns regarding AI misuse immediately

Misuse of AI may result in disciplinary action in line with the Staff Conduct Policy.

Monitoring of this Policy

It will be the responsibility of Sophie Startin (manager) to ensure that all staff, including new or temporary staff, are familiar with this policy and to monitor that it is being implemented. This will be reviewed through both formal and informal observation of staff practice. Staff will be reminded of the importance of data protection and the use of social media through their CPD review.

See also

Child Protection Policy

Confidentiality Policy

Curriculum Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Safe Recruitment Policy

Parental Participation Policy

GDPR Privacy Policy

Links to national policy

When reviewing your policy, please reflect on the 'Health & Social Care Standards My support, My life' - <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00520693.pdf>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/un-convention-rights-child-guide-children-young-people-2/pages/1/>

Legislation

Settings are advised to risk assess social media tools to comply with The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, The Children Act 1989, The Childcare Act 2006, The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and The Computer Misuse Act 1990 which clarify that all settings have a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and early years staff.

Find out more:

www.shakesocial.co.uk

Email: info@shakesocial.co.uk

SSSC (Social media guidance for social service workers)

<https://www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/article/KA-02289/en-us>

[SSSC Codes of Practice - Scottish Social Services Council](#)

<https://education.gov.scot/media/3bjpr3wa/realisingtheambition.pdf>

