



ANDERIDA ADOLESCENT CARE

SOCIAL NETWORKING AND INTERNET POLICY

The definition of “social networking”

Any form of communication on the internet via written word, images, music, photography or online gaming can be deemed as social networking. This policy sets out the guidelines regarding social networking for employees and young people. This guidance is to keep employees and young people safe, reduce the risk of allegations and enable staff to keep their personal lives separate from the work environment.

Identifying oneself as an employee of the company

Most social networking sites have fields in the user profile for work experience, job title, etc. By identifying oneself as an employee of Anderida Adolescent Care, a social networker becomes, to some extent, a representative of that company, and everything he/she posts has the potential to reflect on the company and its image. Therefore, employees are not permitted to identify themselves on any networking sites as an employee of Anderida Adolescent Care. Even in cases where employees have not identified themselves as being employed by Anderida Adolescent Care, they are not permitted to put any data on any kind of site that makes any reference to the young people or the work of Anderida Adolescent Care.

In-House Communication

Communication between the homes, the office and external organisations takes place daily and must be both appropriate and relevant. All emails sent by staff on behalf of the organisation must be from Anderida Adolescent Care email addresses only and a clear identifier of the originator of such data logged. Where appropriate, employees may need communications to be checked by a senior member of staff prior to sending. Employees are not permitted to use Anderida Adolescent Care email addresses for personal use. Almost all communication within the organisation is now held in the Anderida Care Server (see recordings guidelines).

Communication between employees and young people using Social Networking

Staff are not permitted to communicate with young people in Anderida Care via the following:

Email

Employees are not permitted to divulge their personal email address to young people who are in the care of Anderida Adolescent Care. Any emails sent to children via work email addresses should also copy in the home or if the content is too sensitive to the Homes Manager or a Director.

Instant Messaging (e.g. MSN)

Employees are not permitted to divulge or communicate via instant messaging sites with young people who are in the care of Anderida Adolescent Care.

Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc.)

Employees are not permitted to send or accept friend requests from young persons within Anderida Adolescent Care, unless the young person has moved on to independence and has turned 21 years of age. If the young person is 21 and living independently, contact is only permitted if the young person has initiated it and even then, is not advised by Anderida. Any employee who decides to communicate with a young person under these circumstances must take individual responsibility for the communication as it is not within the remit of the organisation.

Staff are not permitted to communicate with the young people in their care through any social networking sites.

Privacy settings on any employees networking profiles should be set so that young people cannot find their profile. Employees should speak to their supervisors or their social network provider if they need assistance with how to do this.

When posting on any profiles or status updates, employees must adhere to data protection laws and respect the confidentiality of the young people and the company.

Staff are not permitted to display any sexually explicit material on any social networking site or send any such material to other employees as this could be construed as sexual harassment. Staff should think very carefully about the appropriateness of what they post in general, remarks that are considered discriminatory, bullying, harassment or offensive in other ways may be referred to team managers to review with you and consider your job role.

EMPLOYEES SHOULD NEVER BE ON ANY SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES DURING WORKING HOURS, EITHER ON A PC OR THEIR MOBILE PHONES.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND APPS

With the development of the internet and advancement of social networking apps it is important that all staff are aware of the different forms of communication apps and picture messaging available to young people and the risks these may cause to their safety.

Many apps now use location services as a standard feature to help connect users and at times you may not even be aware this is happening. Apps such as 'Snapchat', 'Instagram' and 'Facebook' are only a few we know about that this feature applies. In particular, Snapchat has a Map feature which shows the users location clearly and as detailed as the road they are stood on, which can be seen all over the world.

Anonymous communication apps are a growing concern in our digital world and increasingly causing risk to our young people. Apps such as 'Yikyak', 'Ask.fm' and 'Whisper' are again only a few we are aware of where it is encouraged for anyone and everyone to speak anonymously and divulge in secrets. This has led to untraceable cyberbullying or trolling and suicide. Other apps such as 'Bluewhale' have also been linked to an increase in suicidal rates of its users of all ages even as young as 12.

Photo, video and profile sharing apps are becoming easier and easier for young people to become involved in, even dating apps aimed for adults and late teens have also been easily accessed by young people increasing the risk of CSE, stalking and other harmful activities. Many photo apps such as 'Instagram', 'Shots of me' and 'Frontback' allow easy sharing of pictures and selfies and add that to locations and you have another safety concern.

Staff must also be aware of jailbreak programs and icon hiding apps. These specific programs allow users to override parental controls and hide app icons from view allowing young people to be secretive about the apps they are using and hide inappropriate content, such as adult gaming.

When seeing your young person with such apps, it is important to explain the dangers this may be exposing them to. Encouraging them to turn their location services off, increase their privacy settings or even block and prevent the use altogether are 'must dos'. For any safeguarding concerns, it is important to also inform your house manager and safeguarding officer.

For any further advice contact the Professional Online Safety Helpline (POSH)
helpline@saferinternet.org.uk or 0344 381 4772