



# **LITTLEVIEW DAY NURSERY**

## **Online SAFETY POLICY**

# CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Rationale	3
Online Safety Co-ordinator	
Teaching and Learning	
Notes on the legal framework	
Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2000	
Criminal Justice Act 2003	4
Sexual Offence Act 2003	
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018	5
The Computer Misuse Act 1999	
Malicious Communications Act 1998	
Copyright Design and Patents Act 1998	
Public Order Act 1986	
Obscene Publications Act 1959 & 1964	6
Protection from Harassment Act 1997	
Regulations on Investigatory Powers Act 2000	
Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008	
Education and Inspections Act 2006	
<b>Appendices</b>	
A. How does internet use benefit education?	7
B. How can internet use enhance learning?	
C. Managing information systems by Hillview	
D. How will email be managed?	8
E. How will photographic images be managed?	
F. Parental rights to take photographs	9
G. Can children's images or work be published?	10
H. How will social networking, social media and personal publishing be managed?	
I. How will filtering be managed by Hillview?	
J. How should personal data be protected?	11
K. How will internet access be authorised?	
L. How will risks be assessed?	
M. How will Nursery/school staff respond to any incidents of concern?	12
N. How will online safety complaints be handled?	13
O. How is the internet used across the Hillview community?	
P. How will Cyberbullying be managed by Hillview?	
Q. How will mobile phones and personal devices be managed?	14
R. How will the policy be discussed with staff?	16
S. How will parents' support be enlisted?	17
Adendum: Dealing With Complaints against Schools and Settings by Parents or Carers on Social Networking Sites	18



## **1. Rationale**

1.1 In today's society, children, young people and adults interact with technologies such as mobile phones, games consoles and the Internet on a daily basis and experience a wide range of opportunities, attitudes and situations. The exchange of ideas, social interaction and learning opportunities involved are greatly beneficial to all, but can occasionally place children, young people and adults in danger.

1.2 Online Safety covers issues relating to children and young people as well as adults and their safe use of the Internet, mobile phones and other electronic communications technologies, both in and out of school/setting. It includes education for all members of the setting & school community on risks and responsibilities and is part of the 'duty of care' which applies to everyone working with children.

## **2. Online Safety Co-ordinator**

Victoria Beebe is the appointed online Co-ordinator and settling Designated Safeguarding lead.

## **3. Teaching and learning**

3.1 Internet use is part of the curriculum and is a positive tool for learning. The Internet is a part of everyday life for education, business and social interaction.

3.2 Children use the Internet outside Nursery and staff need to remind parents about Internet safety information and to take care of their children's online safety and security. Littleview highlight this through newsletters and useful website addresses being forwarded to parents.

3.3 The purpose of Internet use in Nursery is to support learning, to promote children's ICT skills, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the Nursery management functions.

## **4. Notes on the legal framework**

4.1 This section is designed to inform users of potential legal issues relevant to the use of electronic communications. It is not professional advice and schools/settings should always consult with their Local Area Children's Officer from the Children's Safeguard Team or Safer Schools Partnership Officer from Kent Police if they are concerned that an offence may have been committed.

4.2 Many young people and, indeed, some staff use the Internet regularly without being aware that some of the activities they take part in are potentially illegal. Please note that the law around this area is constantly updating due to the rapidly changing nature of the internet.

## **5. Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006**

5.1 This Act makes it a criminal offence to threaten people because of their faith, or to stir up religious hatred by displaying, publishing or distributing written material which is threatening. Other laws already protect people from threats based on their race, nationality or ethnic background.

## **6. Criminal Justice Act 2003**

6.1 Section 146 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 came into effect in April 2005, empowering courts to impose tougher sentences for offences motivated or aggravated by the victim's sexual orientation in England and Wales.

## **7. Sexual Offences Act 2003**

7.1 It is an offence to take, permit to be taken, make, possess, show, distribute or advertise indecent images of children in the United Kingdom. A child for these purposes is anyone under the age of 18. Viewing an indecent image of a child on your computer means that you have made a digital image. An image of a child also covers pseudo-photographs (digitally collated or otherwise). This can include images taken by and distributed by the child themselves (often referred to as "Sexting"). A person convicted of such an offence may face up to 10 years in prison.

7.2 The offence of grooming is committed if you are over 18 and have communicated with a child under 16 at least twice (including by phone or using the Internet) it is an offence to meet them or travel to meet them anywhere in the world with the intention of committing a sexual offence.

7.3 Causing a child under 16 to watch a sexual act is illegal, including looking at images such as videos, photos or webcams, for your own gratification.

7.4 It is also an offence for a person in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with any person under 18, with whom they are in a position of trust. (Typically, teachers, social workers, health professionals, connexions staff etc fall in this category of trust).

7.5 Any sexual intercourse with a child under the age of 13 commits the offence of rape.

7.6 *N.B. Schools should have a copy of "Children & Families: Safer from Sexual Crime" document as part of their child protection packs.*

## **8. Communications Act 2003 (section 127)**

8.1 Sending by means of the Internet a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or sending a false message by means of or persistently making use of the Internet for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety would constitute an offence liable, on conviction, to imprisonment. This wording is important because an offence is complete as soon as the message has been sent: there is no need to prove any intent or purpose.

## **9. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018**

9.1 GDPR requires anyone who handles personal information to notify the Information Commissioner's Office of the type of processing it administers

and must comply with important data protection principles when treating personal data relating to any living individual. GDPR also grants individuals rights of access to their personal data, compensation and prevention of processing.

#### **10. The Computer Misuse Act 1990 (sections 1 - 3)**

10.1 Regardless of an individual's motivation, the Act makes it a criminal offence to:

- gain access to computer files or software without permission (for example Using someone else's password to access files);
- gain unauthorised access, as above, in order to commit a further criminal act (such as fraud); or
- impair the operation of a computer or program (for example caused by viruses or denial of service attacks).

10.2 UK citizens or residents may be extradited to another country if they are suspected of committing any of the above offences.

#### **11. Malicious Communications Act 1988 (Section 1)**

11.1 This legislation makes it a criminal offence to send an electronic message (email) that conveys indecent, grossly offensive, threatening material or information that is false; or is of an indecent or grossly offensive nature if the purpose was to cause a recipient to suffer distress or anxiety.

#### **12. Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988**

12.1 Copyright is the right to prevent others from copying or using his or her "work" without permission. The material to which copyright may attach (known in the business as "work") must be the author's own creation and the result of some skill and judgement. It comes about when an individual expresses an idea in a tangible form. Works such as text, music, sound, film and programs all qualify for copyright protection. The author of the work is usually the copyright owner, but if it was created during the course of employment it belongs to the employer.

12.2 It is an infringement of copyright to copy all or a substantial part of anyone's work without obtaining the author's permission. Usually a licence associated with the work will allow a user to copy or use it for limited purposes. It is advisable always to read the terms of a licence before you copy or use someone else's material.

12.3 It is also illegal to adapt or use software without a licence or in ways prohibited by the terms of the software licence.

#### **13. Public Order Act 1986 (Sections 17 — 29)**

13.1 This Act makes it a criminal offence to stir up racial hatred by displaying, publishing or distributing written material which is threatening. Like the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 it also makes the possession of inflammatory material with a view of releasing it a criminal offence.

#### **14. Obscene Publications Act 1959 and 1964**

14.1 Publishing an “obscene” article is a criminal offence. Publishing includes electronic transmission.

#### **15. Protection from Harassment Act 1997**

15.1 A person must not pursue a course of conduct, which amounts to harassment of another, and which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other.

15.2 A person whose course of conduct causes another to fear, on at least two occasions, that violence will be used against him is guilty of an offence if he knows or ought to know that his course of conduct will cause the other so to fear on each of those occasions.

#### **16. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000**

16.1 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIP) regulates the interception of communications and makes it an offence to intercept or monitor communications without the consent of the parties involved in the communication. The RIP was enacted to comply with the Human Rights Act 1998.

16.2 The Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000, however, permit a degree of monitoring and record-keeping, for example, to ensure communications are relevant to school/setting activity or to investigate or detect unauthorised use of the network. Nevertheless, any monitoring is subject to informed consent, which means steps must have been taken to ensure that everyone who may use the system is informed that communications may be monitored.

16.3 Covert monitoring without informing users that surveillance is taking place risks breaching data protection and privacy legislation.

#### **17. Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008**

17.1 Section 63 offence to possess “extreme pornographic image” 63 (6) must be “grossly offensive, disgusting or otherwise obscene”

63 (7) this includes images of “threats to a person life or injury to anus, breasts or genitals, sexual acts with a corpse or animal whether alive or dead” must also be “explicit and realistic”. Penalties can be up to 3 years imprisonment.

#### **18. Education and Inspections Act 2006**

18.1 Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines legal powers for schools which relate to Cyberbullying/Bullying:

18.2 Headteachers have the power “to such an extent as is reasonable” to regulate the conduct of students off site.

18.3 School staff are able to confiscate items such as mobile phones etc when they are being used to cause a disturbance in class or otherwise contravene the school behaviour/anti- bullying policy.

## **Appendices**

### **A. How does Internet use benefit education?**

- access to worldwide educational resources;
- inclusion in the National Education Network which connects all UK schools;
- educational and cultural understanding;
- vocational, social and leisure use in libraries, clubs and at home;
- access to experts in many fields for children and staff;
- professional development for staff through access to national developments, educational materials and effective curriculum practice;
- collaboration across networks of schools, support services and professional associations;
- improved access to technical support including remote management of networks and automatic system updates;
- exchange of curriculum and administration data with Hillview; KCC and DfE;
- access to learning wherever and whenever convenient.

### **B. How can Internet use enhance learning?**

- The Nursery's Internet access will be designed to enhance and extend learning.
- Staff will discuss with children, when appropriate, what Internet use is acceptable and what is not and give clear objectives for Internet use. Littleview will ensure that the copying and subsequent use of Internet-derived materials by staff complies with copyright law.
- Access levels to the internet will be reviewed to reflect the curriculum requirements and the age and ability of children. All computers & iPad are password encrypted so children could not access the internet independently.
- Staff will always guide children to online activities that will support the learning outcomes planned for the children' age and ability.

### **C. Managing Information Systems by Hillview**

- The security of the school information systems and users will be reviewed regularly.
- Hillview Virus protection will be updated regularly.
- Personal data sent over the Internet or taken off site will be encrypted.
- Portable media may not be used without specific permission followed by an anti-virus /malware scan.
- Unapproved software will not be allowed in work areas or attached to email.



- Files held on the school's network will be regularly checked.
- The ICT coordinator/network manager will review system capacity regularly.
- The use of user logins and passwords to access the school network will be enforced

**D. How will email be managed?**

- Littleview staff may only use Hillview school approved email accounts for Nursery/school purposes.
- Staff must immediately tell a designated member of staff if they receive offensive email.
- Staff will only use official school provided email accounts to communicate with parents.
- Access in school to external personal email accounts may be blocked.
- Email sent to external organisations should be written carefully
- The forwarding of chain messages is not permitted.
- Staff should not use personal email accounts during school hours or for professional purposes.
- The contact details on the Hillview website should be the school address, email and telephone number. Staff or children's personal information must not be published.
- The Hillview School website will comply with the school's guidelines for publications including respect for intellectual property rights, privacy policies and copyright.
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Staff and parents and carers can access the Littleview web page from the Hillview school website. <https://www.hillview.kent.sch.uk/community/hillview-community/>

- The Nursery Manager, Nursery Administrator and Hillview Publicity Co-ordinator will take overall editorial responsibility for online content published by the Nursery and school and will ensure that content published is accurate and appropriate.

**E. How will Photographic images be managed?**

Ofsted have no legal requirements with regard to photographic images or use of cameras/videos. Littleview is however registered (and re-registered annually) under General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). As a setting, Littleview seeks the permission of parents/carers when their child first enters the nursery, establishing whether they give authorisation for photographs to be taken.

Photographs that are taken at Littleview are used as evidence of children's learning and development and are kept in their online home/nursery learning journal, Tapestry Photographic images are displayed throughout the nursery of children 'at play' and are an important part of increasing a child's self-image and self-esteem. Consent is obtained from the parent of a child if we were to use these images for anything other than recording purposes beyond the nursery's core learning/development function.

These digital images, once printed from the iPad are usually deleted. Occasionally images are kept, to use in 'slide shows' at parent's evenings or planned events. These images are stored on a secure network which can only be accessed by individual nursery staff. Nursery staff's computer/iPad passwords are not written down.

I iPad used are locked away each night in a locked cabinet our security alarmed building and the nursery and office computers are fully 'logged off' and shut down each night.

#### **F. Parental right to take photographs**

Parents are not covered by the GDPR 2018 if they are taking photographs or making a video recording for their own private use. The GDPR does not, therefore, stop parents from taking photographs or making video recordings at nursery events, such as the Christmas Concert or Sports Day.

Parents are not permitted, however, to take photographs or to make a film recording for anything other than their own personal use (e.g., with a view to selling videos of a nursery event). Recording and/or photographing other than for private use would require the consent of the other parents whose children may be captured on film. Without this consent the GDPR would be breached.

GDPR considerations aside, it is possible to consider banning all filming / recording / photography of nursery productions, sports days etc, if the nursery feels that this is appropriate. We believe, however, that many parents would consider it to be over-cautious to impose such a ban and we have decided not, at this stage, to take this course of action. Should we wish to impose any such ban we would take legal advice in order to ensure that the correct steps are taken, whilst acknowledging that such a ban would be difficult to enforce.

The important thing is to be sure that people with no connection with our nursery do not have any opportunity to film covertly. Staff will quiz anyone

they do not recognise who is using any equipment where images can be taken at events and productions.

**G. Can children's' images or work be published?**

- Images or videos that include children will be selected carefully and will not provide material that could be reused.
- Children's full names will not be used anywhere on the website, particularly in association with photographs/ videos.
- Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before images/videos of children are electronically published.
- Written consent will be kept by the Nursery where children's images are used for publicity purposes, until the image is no longer in use.

**H. How will social networking, social media and personal publishing be managed?**

- Staff official blogs or wikis should be password protected and run from the school website with approval from the Nursery manager. Members of staff are advised not to run social network spaces on a personal basis in line with our code of conduct policy.
- All members of the school/nursery community are advised not to publish specific and detailed private thoughts, especially those that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory.
- Staff personal use of social networking, social media and personal publishing sites will be discussed as part of staff induction and will not be allowed from Nursery or school computers.

**I. How will filtering be managed by Hillview school**

- The school's broadband access will include filtering appropriate to the age and maturity of students.
- The school will work with KCC and the Schools Broadband team to ensure that filtering policy is continually reviewed.
- The school will have a clear procedure for reporting breaches of filtering. All members of the school community (all staff) will be aware of this procedure. If staff discover unsuitable sites, the URL will be reported to the School Online Safety Coordinator who will then record the incident and escalate the concern as appropriate.
- The School filtering system will block all sites on the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) list.
- Changes to the school filtering policy will be risk assessed by staff with

educational and technical experience prior to any changes and where appropriate with consent from the Senior Leadership Team.

- The School Senior Leadership Team will ensure that regular checks are made to ensure that the filtering methods selected are effective.
- Any material that the school believes is illegal will be reported to appropriate agencies such as IWF, Kent Police or CEOP.
- The school's access strategy will be designed by educators to suit the age and curriculum requirements of the students, with advice from network managers.

#### **How will videoconferencing be managed?**

During the Covid pandemic staff will use Microsoft Teams when appropriate for meetings. Staff must be aware of who is present within their home and not discuss confidential nursery matters. Team's meetings will be initiated not recorded.

#### **J. How should personal data be protected?**

- Personal data will be recorded, processed, transferred and made available according to the GDPR 2018.

#### **K. How will Internet access be authorised?**

- The school will maintain a current record of all staff who are granted access to the school's electronic communications. All staff will read and sign the 'Staff Code of Conduct' before using any school ICT resources.
- Parents will be asked to read the Online safety policy
- Nursery Staff and All visitors to the Nursery/ school site who require access to the schools network or internet access will be asked to read and sign an Acceptable Use Policy.
- Parents will be informed that children may be provided with supervised Internet access appropriate to their age and ability.
- When considering access for vulnerable members of the Nursery community (such as with children with special education needs) the Nursery will make decisions based on the specific needs and understanding of the children.

#### **L. How will risks be assessed?**

- The Nursery/school will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that users access only appropriate material. However, due to the global and connected nature of Internet content, it is not possible to guarantee that access to unsuitable material will never occur via a Nursery/school computer. Neither the school nor KCC can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences resulting from Internet use.
- The Nursery will audit ICT use to establish if the online Safety policy is adequate and that the implementation of the online Safety policy is appropriate.

- The use of computer systems without permission or for inappropriate purposes could constitute a criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 and breaches will be reported to Kent Police.
- Methods to identify, assess and minimise risks will be reviewed regularly.

**M. How will the Nursery/school respond to any incidents of concern?**

- All members of the Nursery community will be informed about the procedure for reporting online Safety concerns (such as breaches of filtering, cyberbullying, illegal content etc).
- The online Safety Coordinator will record all reported incidents and actions taken in the Hillview online Safety incident log and other in any relevant areas.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed of any online Safety incidents involving Child Protection concerns, which will then be escalated appropriately.
- The school will manage Online Safety incidents in accordance with the school discipline/behaviour policy where appropriate.
- The Nursery will inform parents/carers of any incidents of concerns as and when required.
- After any investigations are completed, the Nursery/school will debrief, identify lessons learnt and implement any changes required.
- Where there is cause for concern or fear that illegal activity has taken place or is taking place then the Nursery/school will contact the Children's Safeguard Team or Online Safety officer and escalate the concern to the Police.
- If the Nursery is unsure how to proceed with any incidents of concern, then the incident may be escalated to the Area Children's Officer or the KCC Online Safety Officer.
  - a. If an incident of concern needs to be passed beyond the Nursery then the concern will be escalated to the Online Safety officer to communicate to other school & settings in Kent.

**N. How will Online Safety complaints be handled?**

- Complaints about Internet misuse will be dealt with under the Nursery's Complaints Procedure.
- Any complaint about staff misuse will be referred to the Nursery Manager.

- All Online Safety complaints and incidents will be recorded by the Nursery, including any actions taken. Staff and parents will be informed of the complaints procedure.
- Parents will need to work in partnership with the Nursery to resolve issues.
- All members of the Nursery community will need to be aware of the importance of confidentiality and the need to follow the official Nursery procedures for reporting concerns.
- Discussions will be held with the local Police Safer Schools Partnership Co-ordinators and/or Children's Safeguard Team to establish procedures for handling potentially illegal issues. Any issues (including sanctions) will be dealt with according to the Littleview/Hillview's disciplinary, behaviour and child protection procedures.
- All members of the Nursery community will be reminded about safe and appropriate behaviour online and the importance of not posting any content, comments, images or videos online which cause harm, distress or offence to any other members of the Nursery community.

Please also read Appendix 1 KCC'S 'Dealing with Complaints against Schools and Settings by Parents or Carers on Social Networking Sites

**O. How is the Internet used across the Hillview community?**

- The school will liaise with local organisations to establish a common approach to Online Safety.
- The Nursery will provide appropriate levels of supervision (adult supported at all times) for children who use the internet and technology whilst on the Nursery site.
- The school will provide an Acceptable Use Policy, (AUP) for any guest who needs to access the school computer system or internet on site.

**P. How will Cyberbullying be managed by Hillview?**

- Cyberbullying (along with all other forms of bullying) of any member of the school community will not be tolerated. Details are set out in Littleview's policy on behaviour. There are clear procedures in place to support anyone in the school community affected by cyberbullying.
- All incidents of cyberbullying reported to the school will be recorded. There will be clear procedures in place to investigate incidents or allegations of Cyberbullying.

- Staff and parents/carers will be advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence. The school will take steps to identify the bully, where possible and appropriate. This may include examining school system logs, identifying and interviewing possible witnesses, and contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Staff and parents/carers will be required to work with the school to support the approach to cyberbullying and the Nursery/school's Online Safety ethos.
- Sanctions for those involved in cyberbullying may include:
  - The bully will be asked to remove any material deemed to be inappropriate or
  - A service provider may be contacted to remove content if the bully refuses or is unable to delete content.
  - Internet access may be suspended at school for the user for a period of time.
  - Other sanctions for staff may also be used in accordance to the schools anti-bullying, behaviour policy.
  - The Police will be contacted if a criminal offence is suspected.

**Q. How will mobile phones and personal devices be managed?**

It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones and similar devices that will give the most cause for concern; and which will be considered the most susceptible to potential misuse. Examples of misuse are to include the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.

It is understood that should a mobile phone be misused, there will be a negative impact on an individual's safety, dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality. Such concerns are not considered exclusive to children and young people, so the needs and vulnerabilities of all nursery users will be respected and protected.

Mobile phones could also cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and are often considered intrusive when used in the company of others.

It can often be very difficult to detect when mobile phones are present or being used.

The use of all mobile phones needs to be effectively managed to ensure the potential for misuse is to be minimised.

***Designated 'mobile use free' areas are to be situated within Littleview, Sleep areas, changing areas and toilets are considered most vulnerable.***

It is to be ensured that all practitioners will:

- be aware of the need to protect children from harm.
- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- know how to minimise risk.
- be vigilant and alert to potential warning signs of misuse.
- avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to potential allegations.
- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
- be responsible for the self-moderation with regard to use of any devices.
- be aware of the importance of reporting concerns immediately.

#### **Procedure for mobile phone use:**

- The Nursery allows staff to bring in personal mobile telephones and devices for their own use. Under no circumstances does the nursery allow a member of staff to contact a current parent/carer using their personal device.
- Users bringing personal devices into nursery must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device.
- All staff must ensure that their mobile telephones/devices are left inside their bag throughout contact time with children. Staff bags should be placed in the locked stock room unless requested by the Manager or Deputy to move them to another appropriate location (ie. because of personnel working on the boiler).
- If any staff member has a family emergency or similar and required to keep their mobile phone to hand, prior permission must be sought from the Manager or Deputy and the mobile phone should be placed in the kitchen in view of all staff.
- If staff have a personal emergency they are free to use the setting's phone or make a personal call from their mobile in the designated staff area, i.e. staff room.
- Mobile phone calls may only be taken at staff breaks or in staff members' own time and in the designated staff area.
- Staff (will need to) ensure that the Manager has up to date contact information and that staff make their families, children's schools etc. aware of emergency work telephone numbers. This is the responsibility of the individual staff member.
- All parent helpers will be requested to place their bag containing their phone in the stock room or another appropriate location and asked to take or receive any calls in the stock room area where their phone must remain.
- All Littlview 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.



- During group outings nominated staff will have access to the setting's nominated mobile phone, which is to be used for emergency purposes only.
- It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and report any concerns to the Nursery Manager.
- Concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately (see allegations against a member of staff policy).
- The Manager reserves the right to ask to check the image contents of a member of staff's mobile phone should there be any cause for concern over the appropriate use of it. If access is denied then the phone will be immediately and securely locked away and appropriate authorities contacted.
- Should inappropriate material be found then our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted immediately as will Ofsted and HSG personnel manager and head teacher. We will follow the guidance of the LADO as to the appropriate measures for the staff member's dismissal.

**R. How will the policy be discussed with staff?**

- The Online Safety Policy will be formally provided to and discussed with all members of staff. To protect all staff and students, the school will implement Acceptable Use Policies.
- Staff will be made aware that Internet traffic can be monitored and traced to the individual user. Discretion and professional conduct is essential.
- Up-to-date and appropriate staff training in safe and responsible Internet use, both professionally and personally, will be provided for all members of staff.
- Staff who manage filtering systems or monitor ICT use will be supervised by the Nursery Manager and have clear procedures for reporting issues.
- The Nursery will highlight useful online tools which staff should use with children in the Nursery. These tools will vary according to the age and ability of the children.
- All members of staff will be made aware that their online conduct out of school could have an impact on their role and reputation within Nursery. Civil, legal or disciplinary action could be taken if they are found to bring the profession or institution into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities.

**S. How will parents' support be enlisted?**

- Parents' attention will be drawn to the school Online Safety Policy in newsletters, the Nursery handbook and in time on the Nursery website. A partnership approach to online safety at home and at Nursery with parents will be encouraged. This may include offering parent evenings with demonstrations and suggestions for safe home Internet use, or highlighting Online Safety at other attended events e.g. parent evenings and sports days.
- Parents will be requested to sign an Online Safety/Internet agreement.
- Advice on useful resources and websites, filtering systems and educational and leisure activities which include responsible use of the Internet will be made available to parents.
- Interested parents will be referred to organisations listed in the "Online Safety Contacts and References" section.
- Online Safety audit/ Risk assessment (RA) in RA folder in entrance hall.

## **Dealing With Complaints against Schools and Settings by Parents or Carers on Social Networking Sites**

This guidance has been written by the Kent Area Education Officers (AEOs) and the Kent Education Safeguarding Team. If Kent education settings wish to discuss this document or any other online safety concerns, please contact the Education Safeguarding Adviser (Online Protection) or e-Safety Development Officer.

### ***Disclaimer***

***Kent County Council (KCC) makes every effort to ensure that the information in this document is accurate and up to date. If errors are brought to our attention, we will correct them as soon as practicable. Nevertheless, KCC and its employees cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused as a result of reliance on any content in this publication***

## **1. Introduction**

The increasing number of people using social networking sites has had both a positive and adverse effect on the reputation of schools in local communities. Many schools have used social media as an effective tool for parental engagement, e.g., to forward information through Facebook and Twitter, and all parents are now encouraged to comment regularly through Parent View. However, in some cases, parents have bypassed the school's

complaints procedures and taken to social networking sites to criticise and, in some cases, make malicious comments about individual members of staff or the community or regarding decisions that have been taken by the Headteacher.

In many ways the use of social networking sites to express these opinions is an extension of how people can already express their views on the internet. People use sites such as 'Trip Advisor' to review holiday accommodation and are encouraged to give online assessments of particular products they have purchased. However, remarks made about a school, member of staff or child can be destabilising for a community and, in particular, for the professional status of staff members who may have had allegations made against them and the emotional well-being of children and young people who may have been identified. It can also lead to a 'whispering campaign' which can undermine the school leadership or target a particular child or family.

A key question is how should schools and settings respond to complaints made on social networking sites by parents/carers? The vast number of social media profiles and pages means that it can be very hard for educational settings to proactively monitor issues that are being discussed by parents and carers and often, will only become aware of a concern when they are brought to the school's attention by members of staff or parents who may have access to the comments.

For simplicity we have used terms such as 'school' within this document, but stress that its use within other educational settings is relevant and appropriate. This guide will focus on Facebook as it is currently the most common source of concern; however additional guidance for reporting and responding to concerns on other popular social networking sites can be accessed via the Education Safeguarding Adviser (Online Protection).

## 2. Responding to Specific Concerns

It is important to acknowledge that each situation will be different and there may be various complicating factors which need to be taken into account; however, the following guidance outlines the steps that we (the Kent Area Education Officers and Education Safeguarding Team) would encourage leaders and managers of Kent Schools and Settings to take when responding to specific concerns. A simple flowchart is provided within Appendix 1.

### A. Keep calm

Parents are entitled to hold opinions about schools, many of which will be positive, some however might not be so pleasant but expressing these views is not always illegal. It is important to recognise that it isn't always possible to prevent parents posting comments online, and unless the comments make a credible threat towards someone's safety (such as death threats or other specific threats of violence towards staff), name a teacher who is subject to an allegation, contain hate content or could be considered as harassment (and therefore a criminal offence has been committed) then the comments cannot always be removed. Please see appendix 2 for further details on the potential legal implications.

However, this does not mean that this behaviour should be tolerated, especially if it is directed at specific members of the school community. The best course of action is for Headteachers to adopt a partnership approach with parents, where possible, and to speak directly with any members of the community involved when any concerns are raised.

In some cases, leaders may decide that the best response will simply be to monitor the situation. In these situations, leaders should still follow the below guidance regarding gathering evidence in case action is required at a later stage.

## B. Gather evidence

When the school becomes aware of any information that is damaging towards an individual member of staff and/or the school community, it is important to gather evidence (such as [screen shots](#) and printouts, includes times, dates and names where possible and ensuring the identity of the person who reported the issue is removed) and establish exactly what has been posted. This may have to be done through various methods as the information may have only been shared through the connections of specific people. However, it is important that evidence be submitted so that the facts can be established.

When dealing with cases involving Facebook, a group of parents may have set up a site or closed/secret group to comment about or in some cases, criticise the school or individual members of staff. This is usually done through a Facebook page which is then 'liked' by those with an account or via closed or secret group whereby members have to request to join or be invited by another group member. On a Facebook page the comments will always be public; however, in a closed or secret group they will only be visible to other group members. It is important, where possible, to find out who has set up the page or group, as usually this is the parent or carer who has the grievance. It can sometimes be difficult to trace the owner of a Facebook "page" however a closed group will publicly identify the members any members and also which members are "administrators".

It is also essential, at this stage, that members of staff, including non-teaching staff and governors, do not become embroiled in any of the discussion threads as this sometimes can inflame the situation. Headteachers/managers should ensure that members of staff are aware of how to respond to concerns - further information is contained within section 4: 'Preventative Actions'.

In some cases, parents may post comments on their own personal Facebook profiles. The visibility of these comments will depend on the individual parent's privacy settings. If a comment is public (this is indicated by the presence of a globe icon next to the post) then it will be visible to anyone who has access to the internet, even if they do not have a Facebook account. Other privacy settings may include "friends only" (only those people who are friends with the original poster can see the comment) or "friends of friends". It is important for all Facebook users to be aware that even if a comment has been shared with "friends only" it is still possible for other users to "share" their friend's comments with their own Facebook friends or take screenshots. In cases where comments have been shared with "friends only", it is essential that headteachers ensure that the identity of the person who brought the concern to the school's attention is protected as far as possible.

## C. Reassuring those affected

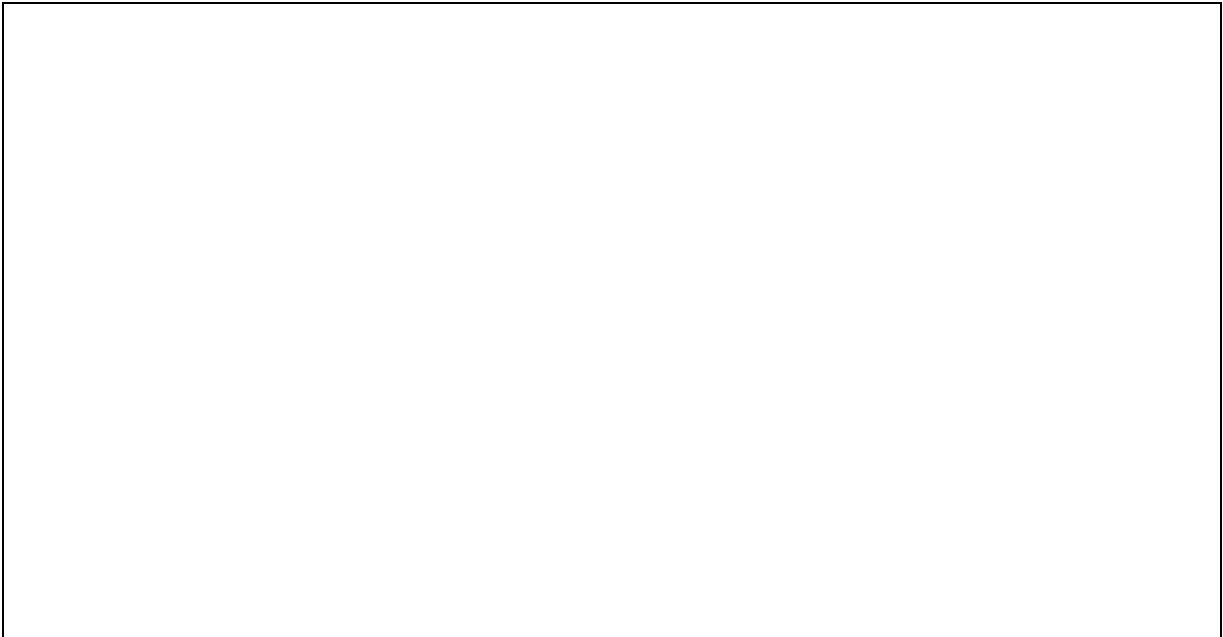
### *i. Supporting staff*

If individual members of staff have been targeted or mentioned, then Headteachers will need to be mindful of their duty of care to those involved as there is a specific duty on employers to protect their staff from third party harassment.

Appropriate support will depend on the nature of the concerns and the reaction of the individual. If the member of staff is already aware of the comments, then Headteachers should explain to them how they intend to address the concerns and offered support to them. Headteachers should encourage staff to let them know if there is any further support that they feel they need.

- Staff may wish to contact their professional/teaching union for additional support and guidance or access support via the Education Support Network: [www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk](http://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk)
- Staff and Headteachers can also access help via the Professional Online Safety Helpline: [www.saferinternet.org.uk/about/helpline](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/about/helpline)
- The school may also want to take further advice on this issue from Schools' Personnel Service ([www.the-sps.co.uk](http://www.the-sps.co.uk))
- If an allegation has been made, then Headteachers will need to speak with the LADO: [www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/managing-staff-allegations](http://www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/managing-staff-allegations)

If the member of staff is unaware of the comments, then Headteachers should consider if it necessary to inform them, and if so, what would be the best approach. Depending on the nature of the comments, then this decision may require additional advice via the AEO, Education Safeguarding Team, LADO (if the comment is an allegation) or other professional body.



***ii. Supporting other members of the community***

There have been cases where negative or malicious comments posted on social media have not been about a member of staff but have been made against a child or another parent. It is important that Headteachers are aware of the need to promote the wellbeing and safety of the whole school community. However, they should also be aware of some of the limitations and be clear about how achievable this may be in some cases.

When responding to issues where parents are writing negative or unkind comments about other parents, the school may need to consider how best to mediate concerns (if appropriate) and to what extent they are able to resolve concerns if they are having a detrimental impact on the school. In cases where there is a concern regarding physical violence, Headteachers may need to involve other agencies.

In some cases, there may be a requirement for Headteachers to consider the potential safeguarding impact (including emotional consequences or the potential risk to physical safety) of children if comments are made online about them by parents. This may require involvement of other external agencies in line with existing safeguarding procedures. If Headteachers are unclear about how to respond, then they should seek advice from the Education Safeguarding Team.

**D. Meet face to face with parents or carers involved**





In many cases the reason why a parent or carer has made comments about the school or staff members online is due to being oblivious about the implications of making such comments, or because they are unaware of or disillusioned with the school's complaints procedure. An immediate response in writing can occasionally inflame situations (and indeed in some cases ends up being shared on social media itself) so a face to face or "offline" discussion is likely to have a more positive outcome. If multiple parents are involved then schools should consider how best to respond safely and effectively, whilst maintaining confidentiality. This may require multiple meetings with parents on an individual basis.

The Headteacher (or other appropriate member of senior leadership staff) should meet with the parents to express their disappointment with the current situation and explain that the school would like to work with them to resolve the problem that is obviously causing them distress. Headteachers should address the matter of social networking with the parents concerned and explain how this behaviour can have a detrimental impact on the school and potentially their children's education, while not allowing the school to actually address their concerns.

It can be helpful, at this point, to discuss the importance of considering any messages they post online in the future, as these can have a detrimental impact on themselves as well as the wider school community. Parents should be made aware that comments posed online (even if made "privately") can easily be misread or misinterpreted and can also be shared without their knowledge or consent.

At this meeting it is important that printouts of the allegations or comments are available for parents, again schools should take steps to ensure that any content which could identify the individual who brought it to the school's attention is removed.

At this stage, it is important that the Headteacher requests that any offending posts or pages are immediately removed and encourages the parents to work with the school, following the schools' complaints procedure if they are unhappy. If parents refuse to remove content which then Headteachers can report the concern to website (see appendix 4 for advice regarding reports to Facebook) or escalate the concern to the Professional Online Safety helpline: [www.saferinternet.org.uk/about/helpline](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/about/helpline) .

If the meeting does not have a successful outcome, then it is important for the Headteacher to stress that the school may have to take further action to resolve the matter. Although it is essential not to cause any further problems, the professional status of staff and the school needs to be maintained and it cannot be compromised by any malicious comments or allegations. The school may want to warn the parents that any existing comments or a continuation of posts could lead to civil or criminal action being taken, although the school would prefer to avoid having to take this route.

If Headteachers think that a criminal offence has been committed or believe that speaking directly to the parents would lead to a confrontation or offence being committed, then they should contact their Local Kent Police contact to work together to support the school in discussing this with the parent concerned in more detail.

### 3. Resolving Difficult Situations

If the matter is not resolved through a face-to-face meeting, the school has a number of options to try and address the situation. While the school will not want to escalate the matter unnecessarily, it is crucial that they try to come to a sensible and proportionate conclusion.

#### A. Arrange a further meeting and invite the chair of governors

To ensure that the parents understand the seriousness of the matter, a further meeting could be arranged with the chair of governors present to convey the damage that these comments are having on the school community. It is essential that the chair of governors is fully briefed before the meeting and that a common approach is taken by the school to address this matter. Again, it gives an opportunity for the parents to share any grievances and for an action plan to be established to deal with any concerns expressed by them.

If parents refuse to meet with the school, then the Headteacher/chair of governors may wish to use the final letter in appendix 2. Please note that all other options should be explored before using this letter.

#### B. Report content to the site involved

If the parents do not agree to remove any offending content or pages, they have set up, then the school can report content to the website where it has been posted. Usually this raises a 'ticket' with those who monitor content on the site so they can assess this in relation to whether any of the terms and conditions have been violated. Schools have to be aware that

there will be a time delay in the review of this content and that if the content does not breach the terms and conditions, then the site administrators will not remove it. Forced removal of comments may only occur if the comments break the law or break the website's terms and conditions.

Information about how concerns can be reported to Facebook can be found in appendix 4. For other sites, it may be helpful to visit the site being used as many will have a help or report section.

### c. Take further advice

The final step in some cases may be for a school to seek legal advice on comments posted on a social media site. In some cases, this has resulted in a letter from a solicitor being sent out to the parents warning them that malicious allegations could result in legal action. Headteachers should be aware that in some cases this can have a detrimental impact and can inflame situations further, so it is recommended to try all other possible routes before proceeding.

In cases where a criminal offence has been committed then police advice should be sought at an early stage. This should usually take place via 101, but if there is an immediate risk of harm to any member of the school community this should be reported via 999. It is advisable that schools record any crime reference numbers etc., even if police action is not considered to be necessary.

If an allegation has been made against a member of staff, then advice must be sought from the LADO service.

If Kent Schools and Settings are concerned that an issue may receive media attention, then they may also wish to seek advice from the KCC Press Office [www.kccmediahub.net/about](http://www.kccmediahub.net/about)

## 4. Preventative Actions

Allegations or malicious comments against members of staff or the school can have an unwanted effect on the school's ethos, which can result in a detrimental effect on children and young people. It is crucial that schools take steps to try and prevent these types of issues from reoccurring.

It is important for leaders to be realistic about what they hope to achieve when responding to negative comments or complaints on social media. Leaders should remember that isn't always possible to prevent parents posting comments online, and comments cannot always be removed. The focus should therefore be on achieving the best outcomes for children, especially if they are at the centre of the concern.

## A. Build a whole community ethos towards safe use of social networking

Schools may wish to regularly highlight awareness regarding responsible use of social networking such as via school newsletters etc. Example text and letters can be found in appendix 3.

If there have been specific issues, schools could consider sending a specific letter to parents to encourage them to be mindful about what they post on social networking sites and to be aware of the impact such comments could have on the school community. The letter could also include the fact that unpleasant or hurtful comments should not be posted online as they may potentially be considered as a criminal offence. For template letters please see appendix 3.

The school may want to remind all parents of the school's official communication and complaints channels which are available to be used should they need them, as this is the most appropriate way of dealing with any concerns. Schools may also wish to remind parents that they can "report" any unpleasant comments or content to Facebook or other social networking sites, who may remove comments and block/ban users who break these rules. Parents should also be aware of the importance of role modelling appropriate behaviour for their children online, much like they should offline.

Leaders should ensure that all members of staff receive safeguarding training that is robust and up-to-date and covers online safety (as identified within 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2016). This training should include ensuring that all members of staff know how to respond to concerns they may see online in a way that supports the school and also does not compromise them. Leaders should ensure that all members of staff sign an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and are aware of expectations with regards their use of social media.

## B. Home-School Agreements

Most schools have a contract between parents and the school to ensure that children and young people are fully supported with their learning and welfare both inside and out of the classroom. Many of the statements refer to parents reinforcing schools' policies on homework, behaviour and conduct. In order to counter any parent discussing sensitive issues about individual teachers or pupils on social networks, a number of schools have decided to include a statement on the Home-School Agreement to try and stop parents from making derogatory or malicious comments. While it is difficult to monitor all parents' use of social networking sites, it does show that the school takes this matter seriously and, the fact

that parents have signed the agreement, means that they have a responsibility to act appropriately.

### C. Acceptable Use Policies (AUP)

All schools should have an AUP that is signed by staff and pupils to ensure that they use digital technology and the internet within school safely and understand the sanctions resulting from breaches of this policy. A number of schools have included statements that refer to parental support on this matter and these also ask parents to monitor children and young people's use of digital technology and social media while they are out of school. The policy should be reviewed and, where necessary, updated on an annual basis; and schools could include a statement on parental use of social networking. Please be aware that this

approach can sometimes be difficult to enforce. Further advice and guidance regarding AUPs can be found at [www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/e-safety](http://www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/e-safety)

#### D. Schools' policies (including the complaints policy)

Whenever there is a dispute between a parent and a school, it is important that the complaints procedure is followed so that grievances are taken seriously, and solutions can be quickly found to ensure that the child or young person's education is not disrupted. The complaints policy should be easily accessible via the school's website. Headteachers may also wish to draw attention to this concern in other related policies including anti-bullying, Safeguarding, online safety, data protection/security and confidentiality.

In accordance with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2016, schools will need to have a staff code of conduct, which includes the use of social media. Schools and settings may choose to have a specific social media policy (or integrate this within existing policies such as an online safety policy). A social media policy should cover appropriate use of social media by the school and also identify appropriate behaviour on social media for all members of the community. Further advice and guidance regarding social media policies can be found at [www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/e-safety](http://www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/e-safety)

#### E. Promote positive use of social media

Some schools are now exploring the proactive use of social media as a positive engagement tool for parents. Many social media complaints arise out of parental frustrations and because parents may feel that they are not listened to or valued by schools. This is why many parents

take the matter out of the schools' hands and set up unofficial and unapproved Facebook pages or groups.

In some cases, Facebook pages or groups may be set up and run (either officially or unofficially) via parent teacher associations or other similar groups. It is important that in these cases the headteacher is involved in ensuring that the groups are run in accordance with the school policies and clear boundaries are in place about appropriate online behaviour. The Kent AUP template guidance includes a template acceptable use policy for official parent run Facebook pages/groups and the “using social media” guidance includes disclaimers and advice for leaders.

If a school has an official and appropriately managed Facebook page or group, then this can minimise some of the concerns or ensure that the school has a way to respond appropriately via an official and approved communication channel.

Further guidance (including template policies etc.) can be accessed via the Education Safeguarding Adviser (Online Protection) and via [www.e-safety.org.uk](http://www.e-safety.org.uk)

## F. Other approaches

Headteachers may want to consider implementing a range of routes to encourage parents to raise concerns directly with the school, for example ensuring a senior member of staff is available on the gate at the start and end of the school day, dedicated email accounts etc.

## 5. Conclusion

In the age of social media, all institutions need to be robust against criticisms and opinions.

Complaints by parents are nothing new for schools as, in the past; many have made comments on the playground or at the school gate or have gone to local media outlets such as newspapers to highlight decisions or issues in schools. The main issue is that in today's society, these complaints can easily be shared in the public domain and a post on a social networking site can reach thousands of users instantly, damaging reputations and giving a misleading slant to any issue.



## Appendix 1: What to do if a Complaint is made on Social Networking by a Parent or Carer



## Appendix 2: Legal Information relating to comments posted on social media about staff/schools

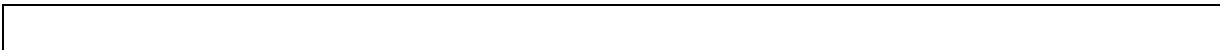
In most circumstances where parents are expressing an opinion, it is not possible to take legal action. However, if you feel that it is necessary to pursue a legal course, we recommend that you contact the KCC Legal Team and/or Kent Police.

Issues on social media may become criminal and action may be considered under the following legislation

***This is not legal guidance and schools, and settings are advised to take appropriate legal advice if required. Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and, in some cases, other legislation may apply.***

### Criminal Concerns

- **Protection from Harassment Act 1997:** This Act is relevant for incidents that have happened repeatedly (i.e., on more than two occasions). The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it a criminal and civil offence to pursue a course of conduct which causes alarm and distress, which includes the publication of words. The victim can also bring a civil claim for damages and an injunction against the abuser, although in reality this is a remedy that is only used by individuals with the financial means to litigate, and only possible if the abuser can be identified, which is not always straightforward.



- **Malicious Communications Act 1988:** Section 1 makes it an offence to send an indecent, grossly offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person with the intention that it should cause them distress or anxiety.





- **Public Order Act 1986 (sections 17 — 29):** This Act makes it a criminal offence to stir up racial hatred by displaying, publishing or distributing written material which is threatening.

- **Communications Act 2003:** Section 127 covers all forms of public communications, and subsection (1) defines an offence of sending a 'grossly offensive...obscene, indecent or menacing' communication. Subsection (2) defines a separate offence where for the purposes of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety, a person sends a message which that person knows to be false (or causes it to be sent) or persistently makes use of a public communications system.

- **Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006.** This Act makes it a criminal offence to threaten people because of their faith, or to stir up religious hatred by displaying, publishing or distributing written material which is threatening.

- **The Education Act 2011** makes it an offence to publish the name of a teacher who is subject to an allegation until such a time as that they are charged with an offence. All members of the community need to be aware of the importance of not publishing named allegations against teachers online as this can lead to prosecution. If this is the case, then schools should contact the LADO for further guidance.

## **Civil Concerns: Libel and Privacy**

Comments made online by parents could possibly be classed as Libel in some cases. Libel is defined as 'defamation by written or printed words, pictures, or in any form other than by spoken words or gestures'. The authors of such comments can be held accountable under Defamation law, which was created to protect individuals or organisations from unwarranted, mistaken or untruthful attacks on their reputation.

Defamation is a civil "common law" tort in respect of which the Defamation Acts of 1952 and 1996 provide certain defences. It applies to any published material that damages the reputation of an individual or an organisation, and it includes material published on the internet. A civil action for defamation can be brought by an individual or a company, but not by a public authority. Libel is a civil and not criminal issue and specific legal advice may be required.

Where defamatory material is posted on a website, the person affected can inform the host of its contents and ask the host to remove it. Once the host knows that the material is there and that it may be defamatory, it can no longer rely on the defence of innocent dissemination in the Defamation Act 1996. This means that the person affected could (if the material has been published in the jurisdiction, i.e., in England and Wales) obtain a court order (an injunction) to require removal of the material and could sue either the host or the person who posted the material for defamation.

### **Other issues**

If social media is used to publish private and confidential information (for example breaches of data protection act) about an individual, it could give rise to a potential privacy claim and it is possible to seek an injunction and damages.

## **Appendix 3: Template letters**

**Please be aware that schools must not share any information which could compromise a live police investigation. Please seek advice from the Education Safeguarding Team if this is a concern.**

### **i. Preventative approaches**

#### **General Awareness Information for Newsletters**

At Littleview we strive to achieve the best for all of our children, however we recognise that on some occasions you may feel that we could have done better. We would like to encourage you to come in and discuss any concerns with the school by speaking to Vicki Beebe, Littleview's nursery manager.

We would be grateful if parents do not use social media to raise complaints but instead, we encourage you to come into school and speak with us so that we can understand your concerns and help solve the problem. Complaints on social media can be damaging for the nursery, its staff and most importantly the children.

If you still feel that the issue has not been dealt with appropriately then we will provide you with a copy of the formal complaint's procedures.

## General Awareness Letter for all parents

Dear Parent/Carers

Online Safety is an important part of keeping children safe at Littleview. We can only be successful in keeping all of our children safe online if we work with you to ensure that online safety messages are consistent and that all members of the community behave safely and appropriately online.

We are writing to you to request your support in ensuring that our children have responsible online role models when posting and sharing content on social media sites. Whilst we are all entitled to have our own views and opinions, we would like to ask that all members of our nursery community consider how our comments may be misunderstood or misinterpreted when shared online and the possible impact and consequences on others of our online actions.

If parents/carers have any concerns or complaints regarding Littleview then we would like to request that they be made using official channels so we can work together to help resolve any concerns that parents/carers may have. The complaints procedure, behaviour policy and our child protection policy are available online via the school website <https://www.hillview.kent.sch.uk/community/hillview-community/> or upon request from Vicki Beebe.

As responsible adults it's important that we all consider the potential impact and implications of online behaviour for ourselves and our families, as well as other members of the nursery community. Littleview is keen to work in partnership with parents and carers to promote responsible internet use and acknowledge how important your role is in setting a good example of positive and responsible online behaviour for your child(ren).

More information about online safety can be found at the following places:

- [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents)
- [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
  - [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)
- [www.nscpsc.org.uk/onlinesafety](http://www.nscpsc.org.uk/onlinesafety)
  - [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)
  - [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)

If parents/carers wish to discuss this matter further or have any other online safety concerns the please contact Vicki Beebe our Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Many thanks in advance for your support in this matter,

Littleview Day Nursery

## ii. Letters Following Specific Issues

### Template Incident Letter (following a specific issue) for all parents

**NB – do not send this letter until after parents involved have been spoken with.**

Dear Parent/Carers

Online Safety is an important part of keeping children safe at Littleview. We can only be successful in keeping all of our children safe online if we work with you to ensure that online safety messages are consistent and that all members of the community behave safely and appropriately online.

Unfortunately, it has been brought to our attention that some parents/carers have been using **xxxx** as a forum **to complain and/or be abusive about the school/setting and/or members of staff/parents/children in the school/setting community**. Whilst we are all entitled to have our own views and opinions, we would like to ask that all members of our community consider how this may be misunderstood or misinterpreted when shared online and the possible impact and consequences of these actions. We have spoken to those parents concerned and whilst we can continue to raise the profile of online safety within school, we need the help of the whole community to support us in keeping our wider community safe online.

It is important that all members of the Littleview community understand that the use of technology (including social networking, mobile phones, games consoles and other websites) to deliberately threaten, upset, harass, intimidate or embarrass someone else could be considered to be cyberbullying or harassment. Cyberbullying is just as harmful as bullying in the real world and is not tolerated at Littleview. We take all instances of cyberbullying or harassment involving any members of our community very seriously as we want members of the community to feel safe and happy both on and offline. Posting threatening, obscene or offensive comments online can also potentially be considered as a criminal offence and can therefore have serious consequences.

Any complaints regarding Littleview should be made using the correct and official channels so we can work together to help resolve any concerns that parents/carers may have. The complaints procedure and other relevant policies such as behaviour or child protection policies are available online via the school website <https://www.hillview.kent.sch.uk/community/hillview-community/> or upon request from Vicki.

I would like to ask all parents/carers to think carefully about the information and comments they post online. As responsible adults it's important that we all consider the potential impact and implications posting such content may have on you and your family as well as other members of the community. I would also like to remind all parents/carers about the need for us all to work in partnership to promote responsible internet use. Your role in settings a good example of positive and responsible online behaviour for your child(ren) is crucial.

If parents/carers wish to discuss this matter further, or have any other online safety concerns the please contact myself, Vicki Beebe as the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Many thanks in advance for your support in this matter,

Regards

Vicki

## **Letter to use with parents specifically involved in concerns**

**NB – This template should be used with care and only sent if schools are unable to meet with parents involved face to face**

Dear Parent/carer

It has been drawn to my attention that you have recently made comments online on [site] relating to [event]. I enclose a screenshot of the material in question, which you will note has been signed and dated.

I am disappointed that you have chosen to use this medium to express these views and

I am greatly concerned about the tone of the comments made and their abusive and threatening nature [substitute for more appropriate adjectives if necessary] relating to another member of the school community.

It is important that all members of the Littleview community understand that the use of technology (including social networking, mobile phones, games consoles and other websites) to deliberately threaten, upset, harass, intimidate or embarrass someone else could be considered to be cyberbullying or harassment. Cyberbullying is just as harmful as bullying in the real world and is not tolerated at Littleview. Littleview take all instances of cyberbullying or harassment involving any members of our community very seriously as we want members of the community to feel safe and happy both on and offline.

I would really appreciate a meeting with you to discuss this matter in an open and constructive manner. Please contact me at your earliest convenience to arrange an appointment. I must emphasise, that the conversation will remain confidential between you and me. My colleague [insert name and role e.g., chair of governors] will be present to act as note-taker and you may also wish to be accompanied by a family member or friend (if needed).

I am sure that we will be able to resolve this situation and achieve a positive outcome.

I look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,

Vicki Beebe

Littleview Nursery Manager

## Appendix 4: How to Report and Remove Content on Facebook

### Removal

#### To remove a Facebook post

To remove a comment of a Facebook profile the user must access their profile and click on in the top right of the post and then select the “delete”

#### To remove a Facebook page

Only Facebook or the page administrator can delete a Facebook page. To remove a page admin should:

1. Click Settings at the top of your Page
2. From General, click Remove Page
3. Click Delete [Page name] and follow the on-screen instructions

#### To remove a Facebook group

Only Facebook or the page administrator can delete a Facebook group. Groups are deleted when they have no members. If you've created a group, you can delete the group by removing all its members and then yourself.

1. Go to the group you want to delete and click Members below the cover photo
2. Click next to each member's name and select Remove from Group
3. Select Leave Group next to your name once you've removed the other members

Note: An admin can't delete a group they didn't create unless the original creator chooses to leave it.

## Reporting

When something gets reported to Facebook, they will review it and remove anything that doesn't follow the [Facebook Community Standards](#). Facebook don't include any information about the person who filed the report when they reach out to the person responsible. Please keep in mind that reporting something to Facebook doesn't guarantee that it will be removed.

Headteachers/managers may wish to encourage the member of the community who brought the concern to the schools attention to report the issue themselves.

### Reporting without an Account

If the Headteacher/manager does not have a Facebook account, then a report can be made via this form: [www.facebook.com/help/contact/274459462613911](http://www.facebook.com/help/contact/274459462613911)

To report a concern without an account then you will require the link (URL) to the specific content you're reporting. To get a URL:

1. Click the date or time link in the post or comment
2. Copy the link in the web address bar (see below)

If you're unable to provide the link to the content, Facebook may be able to find the content if you provide as much of the information below as possible:

- Link to the Facebook profile, Page or group that created the content that you're reporting, and the time and date that the content was posted
- A screenshot of the abusive content. If possible, the screenshot should include the name of the person, Page or group that created the content you're reporting and the time and date it was posted.

### To report a Facebook profile:

1. Go to the profile you want to report
2. In the bottom right of the cover photo, click and select **Report**
3. Follow the on-screen instructions

### To report a specific comment/post:

1. Click in the top right of the post you want to report and select **I don't want to see this**
2. Click **Why don't you want to see this?**
3. Choose the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions

#### To report a photo or video:

1. Click on the photo or video to expand it
2. Click **Options** in the bottom right
3. Click **Report Photo** for photos or **Report Video** for videos

#### To report a message:

1. Open the message you'd like to report
2. Click **Actions** in the top right
3. Click **Report Spam or Abuse...** and follow the on-screen instructions

#### To report an abusive Page:

1. Go to the Page you want to report
2. Click on the Page's cover photo
3. Select **Report Page** and follow the on-screen instructions

Facebook will review the Page and remove anything that doesn't follow the [Facebook Community Standards](#). Facebook may also warn or disable the person responsible.

#### To report a group:

1. Go to the group you want to report
2. Click at the top right
3. Pick **Report Group** from the dropdown menu

#### To report a comment:

1. In the top right, click
2. Select **Report**



**Hillview Governors'  
Littleview Nursery  
Online Safety Policy**

Compiled by: Littleview staff

Date of approval by Governors:

Consulted: Most recent update: September 2021  
KCC Online Safety Policy  
Government guidance

Full Governors:

Anticipated review date: September 2022