



Internet Safety Policy

Rationale

Online safety is part of my childminding setting safeguarding responsibilities. It is important that children learn how to keep themselves safe online. Ofcom's 'Children and Parents Media Use and Attitudes Report' (Jan 2019) states that:

- 1% of 3-4 year olds have their own smartphone and 19% have their own tablet
- 52% of 3-4 year olds go online for an average of 9 hours per week
- 45% of 3-4 year olds use YouTube

The previous Childrens Commissioner for England Anne Longfield pushed the need to teach online and internet safety from as young as 4 years old. She stated, "While social media clearly provides some great benefits to children, it is also exposing them to significant risks emotionally".

Risks to children could be:

Content (what they may see):

- Exposure to inappropriate videos. pictures or messages which might upset, worry or frighten them
- Imitating harmful or inappropriate behaviour they see online
- Searching for inappropriate content on purpose or stumbling upon it by accident. This would include using voice activated tools to search for content
- Inadvertently giving apps or websites permission to share their location or other personal information
- Spending real money via in-app or in-game purchases

Contact (who might communicate with them):

- Being abused online (including sexually) by people they don't know, such as when gaming or using video chat
- Being abused online (including sexually) by people they know, such as friends and family members

- Sending images or information to people on the device's contact list
- Being groomed for purposes of radicalisation

Conduct (how they might behave):

- Exhibiting unhealthy behaviours and boundaries around their use of screens
- Being unkind to each other online as well as offline; this could be using mean words or by excluding others from their games
- Using words or terminology which are not appropriate for their age
- Engaging in unhealthy relationships
- As part of natural development, early years children may exhibit curiosity about their own and others' private body parts; if this occurs via technology children may be at risk of taking inappropriate or indecent images and videos of themselves

My aim is to protect all children who use technology while in my care either when using devices that are provided in my setting or when bringing devices from home. All measures listed below apply to devices I provide and the children's own.

Procedure

Children may be permitted to bring personal devices to the setting after discussions with parents about IT equipment children bring from home being protected with appropriate filters. IT equipment may be personal devices such as tablets, mobile phones. Wearable technology e.g. Apple/Smart watches are not permitted in our settings. Children will be able to use IT equipment where I can safely supervise their activity and will only be allowed to access computer games or use social media sites that are listed as suitable for their age or their development stage. Children's physical safety will be monitored with regard to their posture when using devices. Children must not change settings that are in place to protect them – failure to adhere to this may result in the device being withdrawn from their use.

To help protect children from accessing unsuitable material or sites, all the devices owned by my setting that are used by children are set to activate the 'guided access' setting. This means children can't change sites or Apps without the need for me to approve and put in a pin number to allow. Some parents may wish to set guided access on their children's devices. Below are links to explain how to do this.

Apple devices <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ooxeDsF243c>

Android devices <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=1vFoN5KsfyY>

A very small percentage of people may experience photosensitive epileptic seizures when exposed to certain visual images, including flashing lights or patterns that may appear in online games. If a child is vulnerable to these seizures, then such media will not be watched/played with whilst this child is present.

I understand the risks involved with games that can be played online with users from outside the setting. I will help children to understand that they should not give any personal information to people they do not know because sometimes people pretend to be someone else when online. I will tell children that I understand that the internet is a great tool for fun and learning but that they should speak up and not keep secrets if something is worrying them. I will help them to know how to identify and use the report abuse buttons that appear on websites and games if they experience something that upsets them online. I use the internetmatters.org site to get information to help me to understand the apps, games and networks that are commonly used by children of different ages and the potential dangers with these.

I aim to provide an environment where all children feel safe and can talk to me when they are worried about anything, enabling me to provide or seek any additional support that may be required. Online safety information will be presented to children in an appropriate way according to their age and stage of development and will include how to recognise and report a concern.

I will remain alert for any signs of the risks of **Content**, **Contact** and **Conduct** as listed above and take action to top the risk immediately. This may include explanations of why certain behaviours are not acceptable and measures to report any sites or individuals concerned. Parents will be informed of any risks identified and any resulting action as soon as possible. In the event that a child accidentally accesses inappropriate material, they must report this to me immediately. Appropriate action will be to minimise the window, but not close it down in order for investigations to take place.

In agreement with parents, children will be allowed a limited time to use devices while in my setting.

If children bring smartphones into the setting, they are not permitted to take photographs of any other child in the setting without express permission, unless the parents have given that permission to myself first. Children will not normally be permitted to make phone calls or use WhatsApp messaging without prior permission of their parents for specific purposes.

If I have any cause for concern, I will report it, following the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures or my local Safeguarding Partners procedures **Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB)**.

Childminder's Signature:



Date:

22/04/2024