**MUNTERCONNAUGHT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**ASSOCIATION CLG**

**SUPERKIDS**

**PHOTOGRAPHS & INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA**

**POLICY & PROCEDURES**

March 2024

**Statement**

SuperKids is committed to ensuring the appropriate use of the internet (world wide web) and social media and to setting out clear guidelines regarding the photographing and recording of children.

SuperKids is committed to ensuring that no data or information regarding a child, parent/guardian, carer or member of staff is shared/published/divulged without the written permission of the person concerned.

This policy also requires that no child is permitted access to the internet or is photographed or recorded without the prior written permission of his/her parent/guardian.

This policy is underwritten by the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016, the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

**Internet & Emails**

The following must be adhered to as regards the use of the internet and the sending of emails:

* the internet must not be accessed by children unless under the strict supervision of a member of staff for the purpose of educational research or learning opportunities; and
* the internet and the email system must be used by a member of staff only for business/educational purposes including: communication on matters relating to job requirements or for administration purposes; communication of information relating to the service; research regarding educational matters and/or equipment/materials used in the service; assistance in developing the curriculum.

The following are regarded as unacceptable as regards use of the internet and the email system:

* allowing opportunities for children unsupervised access to the internet or access to inappropriate content, which could adversely affect the child’s health, welfare and/or development;
* accessing, downloading or storing/filing inappropriate, defamatory or offensive material;
* disclosing/publishing/divulging confidential information/data about children, families, carers or staff members;
* posting messages to any internet bulletin or discussion board, social media site or any other publicly accessible forum except for authorised business purposes;
* using offensive language or any other language that breaches any policy of the service; and
* using the SuperKids internet system/addresses for any purpose other than is related to SuperKids.

When communicating information via email:

* all guidelines and policies relating to the authorisation and signing of written communications must be observed when sending electronic mail;
* staff must be mindful that anything written/created on the SuperKids computer network or the internet may be viewed by others; and
* copies of all business-related electronic communications and attachments (sent or received) should be kept in accordance with proper record-keeping practices.

**Social Media Sites**

This section of the policy relates to all sites which are publicly accessible and used (inter alia) for the purposes of social messaging, influencing, advertising and establishing discussion forums e.g. Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram.

The requirements outlined above in relation to the use of the internet and the email system apply equally to all social media sites as defined above.

The policy requires that:

* no photographs/videos/digital imagery/recordings of children and/or families are to be published on any social media site under any circumstances;
* when using social media sites, all members of staff must be mindful of their contractual obligations to SuperKids, the requirement to adhere to all of the policies and procedures of SuperKids and, in particular to abide by the terms of this policy, the terms of their contract of employment, the terms set out in the staff handbook and those terms of the SuperKids’ policies regarding data protection and confidentiality;
* staff must not make any derogatory comments about SuperKids, children, parents/guardians, carers, contractors, suppliers and any other person/group connected in any way with SuperKids on any social media site;
* photographs, recordings, videos and/or any other information/data regarding any staff member are not to be posted on any social media site without the express permission of the individual concerned; and
* members of staff must not divulge or discuss any confidential or personal information obtained whilst in the employment of SuperKids on any social media site.

**WhatsApp**

The Manager/Room Leaders at SuperKids have a SuperKids’ mobile phone to contact parents/guardians/carers via the appropriate WhatsApp groups. It should be noted that:

* all the terms of this policy apply to the sending/receiving of WhatsApp messages;
* before using WhatsApp the Manager/Room Leaders should ensure that all members of the WhatsApp group(s) have given their written permission to have their data shared with other members of the group(s);
* WhatsApp should never be used to communicate sensitive information relating to a child and/or parent/guardian and/or member of staff;
* the principal purpose of the WhatsApp group(s) established with the written permission of all concerned is to share with parents/guardians’ information related to the preschool service such as closures and events; and
* when the WhatsApp group(s) are used for the purpose of sharing photographs/videos/recordings, this must only be done in strict accordance with the section (below) of this policy regarding **Photographs & Videos & Recordings.**

**Security & Confidentiality**

* computers must be shut down at the end of the preschool working day;
* usernames and passwords must only be used by the person to whom they are allocated;
* personal memory sticks may be used at work and plugged into the preschool’s computer(s)/system but only for a purpose related directly to the activities of SuperKids. It should be noted that knowingly introducing, by so doing, a virus or causing a virus to be introduced will be regarded as a breach of this policy;
* staff must remember that the preschool’s computer system is not for private/personal use; and
* sites visited and messages sent and received may be viewed by others.

**Photographs & Videos & Recordings**

At the beginning of the preschool year all parents/guardians will be given access to this policy and will be provided with full details as to how photographs, videos and recordings may be used in SuperKids. Parents/guardians will be asked to sign a consent form regarding photographs, videos and recordings but will be advised that, should they not wish to do so, they need not sign. These forms will be retained on file. Where permission is given, it can be withdrawn in writing at any time.

Parents/guardians/visitors/staff members should note that:

* any photographic and/or recording devices can only be used in the setting with the approval of the Manager/ designated person in charge;
* group photographs/videos can only be taken if all the parents/guardians of all children in the group have given their permission for this to be done;
* no photographs, videos or recordings taken in SuperKids at any time may not be published on any social media or publicly accessible site; and
* all images are to be stored/filed and disposed of in line with the SuperKids Data Protection Policy,