



Online Safety, Digital Technology, Photography and Data Protection

Purpose

Woodlands recognises that technology plays an important role in modern early years practice, including documenting children's learning, communicating with families and supporting children's development.

However, technology must always be used safely, appropriately and in a way that protects children's privacy, dignity and welfare.

All staff have a responsibility to understand the risks associated with digital technology and to follow Woodlands' procedures.

Online Safety Culture

Woodlands promotes a positive online safety culture by:

- Teaching children safe and appropriate use of technology.
- Supporting families with online safety information.
- Ensuring staff understand digital safeguarding risks.
- Maintaining safe systems for recording and sharing information.
- Reviewing online safety arrangements regularly.

Online safety is part of safeguarding and applies to all children, staff and families.

Children's Use of Technology

Where technology is used with children, staff will ensure it is:

- Age appropriate.
- Purposeful.
- Supervised.
- Linked to children's learning and development.
- Used in a balanced way.

Staff will consider:

- The child's age and stage of development.
- Individual needs.
- SEND considerations.
- The content being accessed.

Children will not have unrestricted access to online content.

Digital Devices Within Woodlands

Only approved Woodlands devices may be used for:

- Taking photographs.
- Recording children's learning.
- Accessing approved systems.
- Communicating information.

Personal devices must not be used to:

- Photograph children.
- Record children.
- Store children's information.
- Access confidential information.

Photography and Video Recording

Woodlands may use photographs and videos to:

- Record children's learning.
- Celebrate achievements.
- Share children's progress with parents.
- Support assessment.

Photography must:

- Be undertaken using approved Woodlands equipment.
- Be appropriate and respectful.
- Maintain children's dignity.
- Follow parental consent arrangements.
- Be stored securely.

Staff must never:

- Take photographs on personal devices.
- Share children's images through personal accounts.
- Upload images to personal social media.
- Store children's photographs outside approved systems.

Parental Consent for Photographs

Woodlands will obtain appropriate parental permissions before using photographs or videos.

Parents will be informed about:

- How images are used.
- Where images may appear.
- How images are stored.
- Their right to withdraw consent where applicable.

A child's welfare and dignity will always come before recording or sharing an image.

EYlog and Digital Learning Records

Woodlands uses digital systems to support children's learning and communication with families.

Staff must ensure:

- Information entered is accurate and professional.
- Records relate only to the child's development and wellbeing.
- Safeguarding information is recorded appropriately.
- Passwords are kept secure.
- Access is limited to authorised users.

Staff must not:

- Record inappropriate comments.
- Include personal opinions.
- Share login details.
- Access information without a professional reason.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Woodlands recognises that artificial intelligence tools are increasingly used in education and administration.

Staff must not use unapproved AI tools to:

- Upload children's personal information.
- Upload photographs of children.
- Share safeguarding information.
- Create records containing identifiable child information.

Any use of AI must comply with:

- Data protection requirements.
- Confidentiality expectations.
- Woodlands' approval processes.

Human judgement remains essential, particularly in safeguarding decisions.

Social Media

Staff must maintain professional boundaries online.

Staff must not:

- Share information about children or families.
- Post photographs of children connected to Woodlands.
- Discuss incidents involving children.
- Make comments that could damage professional trust.
- Use social media in a way that impacts their suitability to work with children.

Staff should consider that online activity may be permanent and publicly accessible.

Staff Personal Devices

Personal mobile phones and devices must:

- Be stored securely when children are present.
- Not be used in childcare areas unless authorised.
- Not contain children's information or images.

Where staff need to use a personal device in an emergency, this must be reported to the Manager.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Woodlands complies with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- Data Protection Act 2018.

Personal information will only be collected, stored and shared when necessary.

Woodlands will ensure:

- Information is accurate.
- Records are securely stored.
- Access is restricted.
- Information is deleted or retained appropriately.
- Safeguarding information is protected.

Information Sharing for Safeguarding

Woodlands understands that safeguarding may require information to be shared with external agencies.

Information may be shared without parental consent where:

- A child may be at risk of harm.
- Sharing is necessary to protect the child.
- The law allows or requires it.

Safeguarding information will be shared:

- Securely.
- Proportionately.
- With appropriate professionals.

Confidential Conversations

Staff must ensure conversations about children take place:

- In appropriate private areas.
- With only those who need to know.

- Away from other parents, children or visitors.

Staff must never discuss children in public areas.

Cyber Security

Woodlands will take reasonable steps to protect digital information by:

- Using secure passwords.
- Restricting access.
- Updating systems where required.
- Reporting lost devices or breaches immediately.

Any suspected data breach must be reported to the Manager immediately.

Responding to Online Safety Concerns

If a child, parent or staff member raises an online safety concern:

Staff must:

1. Listen and reassure.
2. Record the concern.
3. Report to the DSL or Manager.
4. Follow safeguarding procedures.

Concerns may include:

- Exposure to inappropriate content.
- Online bullying.
- Unsafe adults contacting children.
- Sharing of images.
- Inappropriate use of technology.

Monitoring and Review

Woodlands will regularly review:

- Digital safety procedures.
- Staff understanding.
- Technology use.
- Data protection arrangements.
- Parental communication systems.

Learning from incidents will be used to improve practice.

Key Safeguarding Message

Technology should enhance children's learning and communication, but it must never compromise their safety, privacy or dignity.

At Woodlands:

If we cannot keep a child's information safe, we cannot keep the child safe.