



Great Yarmouth & Gorleston Young Carers

Social Media and Electronic Communication with Young People

As technology develops, the internet and its range of services can be accessed through various devices including mobile phones, computers and game consoles. Although the internet has many positive uses, it provides the key method for the distribution of indecent images of children.

Furthermore, social networking sites, chat rooms and instant messaging systems are increasingly being used by online predators to 'sexually groom' children and young people. In addition, electronic communication is being used more and more by young people as a means of bullying their peers.

All adults working with young people are asked to adhere to the following of this policy to best safeguard the young people we work with.

All electronic communication by the above methods, text message, e-mail, instant messaging or through social networking sites will be undertaken through GYGYC Facebook page and GYGYC email address and through staff issued mobile phones.

All staff, volunteers and regular visitors should always behave responsibly and respectfully when online or texting. They should not post or discuss inappropriate comments/materials. Mobile phones should be turned off during sessions except for the staff issued mobiles which are used in emergencies and parents have these contact numbers.

Staff, volunteers and regular visitors will not use their personal phones to contact young people and will not give out their numbers. It is not appropriate to contact either parents or young people using this method.

Staff, volunteers and regular visitors will NOT have young people as their 'friends' on social networking sites as they have a position of trust in relation to that young person. Should a young person in the organisation request to become a named friend on your social networking page or request that you become a named friend on their page you should decline. The privacy of personal accounts must be set to high whilst working for the organisation to prevent young people gaining personal staff details.

Staff, volunteers and regular visitors are advised to consider carefully what they post as some comments can be seen by friends of friends. This also applies to comments left on other people's pages and the sharing of photographs. Consider your position as a role model in this area.

The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the same requirements as any other media.

Reporting concerns

In the event of a young person showing a staff member, volunteer or regular visitor a text or instant message, image or email that is considered to be inappropriate for a child to have, they must inform the appropriate safeguarding officer. If a young person is concerned with anything they have seen on the internet they are advised to speak to their safeguarding officer.

Our Designated Safeguarding Officer is Terry Macrowan and can be contacted on 07925851849 or by emailing youngcarersproject@btconnect.com