



Social Media Policy

Statement and purpose of policy

KEY recognises that social interaction via the internet is an important and integral part of life and is a valuable means of engaging with young people in youth work practice. Online engagement is often accompanied by fear around boundaries. However, fundamentally, the fears/risks surrounding social media use are similar to those encountered in everyday youth work and can be overcome by applying the same ethical principles.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework of good practice which protects all staff and volunteers and encourages safe and beneficial use of social media by the young people.

This policy should be read in conjunction with KEY's Safeguarding Policy and KEY's Social Media Guidelines.

What are the risks around social media?

- Youth worker 'hearing' things about young people.
- Young person feeling like youth worker is violating their privacy.
- Youth worker being 'on shift' with young people outside of work hours.
- Informality confusing young people about boundaries.
- Young people sharing personal information to staff members.
- Witnessing safeguarding incidents.
- Safeguarding disclosures.
- Misinterpretation of language, including symbols and abbreviations by young people and parents/carers.
- Escalation of negative comments.
- The occurrence of online bullying and discrimination.

How KEY will manage these risks

1. All new staff/volunteers will receive guidelines on the use of Social Media, in relation to KEY, as part of their induction. These will be discussed/explained personally by the lead worker or KEY Trustees to ensure understanding.
2. All young people engaging with KEY will receive a 'Welcome Pack'. This will include a clear explanation of the Social Media formats that KEY uses.
3. KEY will provide Internet Safety information and advice for the young people on an on-going basis.
4. KEY staff will have up to date knowledge of internet/social media issues and will share information with the young people on an informal basis when appropriate. They will encourage safe and positive use of internet and social media sites.