

# Friend or foe?

Email  Password



NDNA Chief Executive **Purnima Tanuku** OBE looks at the problems and possibilities presented by Facebook and Twitter...

## Q Do I need to have a staff policy on Facebook?

**A** Definitely. Whilst Facebook is great for helping people to stay in touch, it can cause difficulties for you as an employer. For example, if a staff member goes into their account during the working day and puts a negative status update that's then seen by a colleague or even a parent, it could be damaging to your reputation. A clear policy outlining key points – e.g. that staff aren't allowed to access Facebook when they're working with children, and shouldn't refer to

any child using the nursery, while giving consideration to the importance of maintaining both their professional image and that of the nursery – is crucial. NDNA members can access a template policy on social media at [www.ndna.org.uk/policies](http://www.ndna.org.uk/policies).

You should discuss your policy with staff so that they feel involved and understand the importance of this policy, and how you're keen to respect their right to a private life. It's also important to make staff aware that this policy applies to other forms of social media such as Twitter.

## Q A number of staff have received 'friend requests' from parents. Should I stop my team from accepting or requesting a parent using the nursery?

**A** This is a difficult situation that needs to be handled sensitively. In a nursery where staff are supporting parents, close relationships can be forged. However, if a team member accepts a parent's friend request, then posts something that might be seen as unprofessional, it could cause problems. The difficulty is that sometimes it may not even be the staff member who has posted the item – it's all too easy for a friend to do

so unwittingly. On the other hand, it can seem offensive to the parent if the staff member doesn't accept them as a 'friend', especially if they have a good relationship with them.

Your policy must include information on your approach to accepting or requesting parents as 'friends'. If you're happy to allow it, encourage staff to consider how their Facebook profile might look to parents. Discuss with staff what they think the best approach is – they may actually prefer to have a policy of not accepting parents rather than feeling obliged to accept their requests. If you do take this approach, it should be covered during parents' inductions.

## Q I want to have a Facebook page for the nursery but I'm concerned by the headlines I've read – should I have one?

**A** A nursery Facebook page can be wonderful – parents can join it and read the status updates you've put around the activities children have been enjoying and even comment on these – but it's important to consider safeguarding arrangements. There are settings on Facebook that allow you to keep a profile private so that only people who have been

accepted can view the contents. If you want to upload photos remember that parents should sign to say they're happy for you to do so. On a practical level you must also make sure you have the resources to update it regularly – you may want to identify a staff member who'll enjoy doing this.

## find out more

NDNA is the national charity and membership association for children's nurseries across the UK, supporting settings across all sectors to deliver the best possible care and early learning for children whilst ensuring they are sustainable businesses. If you have a question, or want to know how NDNA can support you, visit [www.ndna.org.uk](http://www.ndna.org.uk)