AUTISM GUERNSEY

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR ADULTS

Introduction

This Policy provides guidance on how our charity uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect the staff and volunteers who work for us, and the adults who are service users of our charity, to behave online.

It is noted that social media can be a preferred means of communication for people with autism and that digital technology has become an important part of everyday life and offers positive opportunities. However, the increasing number of cases where workplace practice has highlighted inappropriate use of technology and an inability to challenge colleagues has demonstrated the need for clear practice guidance for workers and organisations around safer working practice in this area.

This guidance builds on the 'Safer Working Practice Guidance' issued by the Government Offices in England in 2007.

Aims

The aims of our online safety policy are:

- To protect all individuals involved with our charity and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet).
- To provide staff and volunteers with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents.
- To ensure our charity is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online.

Understanding the online world

As part of using the internet and social media, our charity will:

- Understand the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff and adults on the autism spectrum – when using websites, social media, apps and other forms of digital communication.
- Be aware that it doesn't matter what device is being used for digital interaction, but that the same safety aspects apply whether it is a computer, mobile phone or game console.
- When using social media platforms (including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines.

- Regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including:
  - Making sure concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are written into our reporting procedures including online bullying ('cyberbullying').
- Provide training for the person responsible for managing our organisation's online presence.

Managing our online presence

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least 3 members of staff will have access to each account.
- All mobiles will be password-protected.
- The account will be monitored by a designated person, who will have been appointed by the Services Manager.
- The designated person managing our online presence will seek advice from our designated Safeguarding Lead to advise on safeguarding requirements.
- A designated supervisor will remove inappropriate posts by individuals on the spectrum or staff, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected.
- Account, page and event settings will be set to 'private' so that only invited charity members can see their content.
- Identifying details such as a person's home address or telephone number shouldn't be posted on social media platforms.
- Any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims.
- We'll make sure individuals are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about the running of the account.
- Individuals will need to give permission for photographs or videos of themselves to be posted on social media.
- All of our accounts and email addresses will be appropriate and fit for purpose.

What we expect of staff and volunteers

- Staff should be aware of this Policy and behave in accordance with it.
- Staff should seek advice of the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
- Staff should not 'friend' or 'follow' service users from personal accounts on social media.
- Staff should make sure any content posted is accurate and appropriate, as vulnerable people may 'follow' them on social media.
- Staff should not communicate with service users via personal accounts or private messages
- Staff should avoid communicating with individuals via email or other social media outside of your working hours.

- Emails should be signed off in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols such as 'kisses' ('X's).
- Any disclosures of abuse reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our reporting procedures.
- Staff should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy.
- Staff and young people must not engage in 'sexting' or send pictures to anyone that are obscene, indecent or menacing.
- Staff will discuss the way in which it manages social media.

Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate

When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging), we will take the following precautions to ensure service users' safety:

- Staff should have a separate phone from their personal one for any contact with service users.
- Texts will be used for communicating information – such as reminding individuals about upcoming events – and not to engage in conversation – unless appropriate because of preferred means of communication due to autism.
- If an individual misinterprets such communication and tries to engage a staff member in conversation, the member of staff will take the following steps:
  - End the conversation or stop replying
  - Suggest discussing the subject further at the next meeting or event
  - If concerned about the individual, provide contact details for the Charity's lead welfare officer or appropriate agencies.

Use of other digital devices and programmes

- The principles in this Policy apply no matter which current or future technology is used – including computers, laptops, tablets, web-enabled games consoles and smart TV's – and whether an app. programme or website is used. This will be reviewed on a regular basis.

- We expect individuals to adhere to the guidelines surrounding online use and behaviour set out in this Policy.

As a charity, we commit to implementing this Policy and addressing any concerns quickly and within these guidelines.

Date Policy Adopted: _____

Signature of Chair: _____

Date Policy to be Reviewed: _____