

# Social Media & Networking Policy

(Including Online Communication and Professional Conduct)

## 1. Purpose

Social media and online networking can support communication when used appropriately, but can present safeguarding, confidentiality, professional boundary, and reputational risks if misused.

This policy sets clear expectations for safe, respectful, and professional online behaviour, protecting:

- Children's safety, privacy, and wellbeing
- Families' confidentiality and trust
- Professional boundaries for staff
- The reputation of Peques Anglo-Spanish Nursery Schools
- Compliance with safeguarding and data protection legislation

This policy applies both during and outside working hours.

## 2. Statutory Framework and Supporting Guidance

This policy is informed by and operates in line with the following statutory framework and guidance:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2026)
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (September 2025)

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, including agency and bank staff
- Students and volunteers
- Parents and carers
- Visitors and contractors
- Any individual posting, sharing, or engaging with content relating to Peques

It covers all online platforms, including social media, messaging applications, blogs, forums, online groups, and digital communication tools.

## 4. Core Principles

- Children's images, identities, and personal information must always be protected
- Professional boundaries must be maintained online at all times
- Online behaviour must reflect the same standards expected in person
- Only approved nursery systems and devices may be used for nursery-related communication and content

- Peques' values of respect, inclusion, kindness, and professionalism must be upheld in all online activity
- Digital and AI tools must not be used in any way that identifies, depicts, analyses, or recreates children

## **5. Prohibited Use (Not Permitted)**

Staff, students, and volunteers must not:

### **5.1 Share Content Relating to Children**

This includes photographs, videos, names, voice notes, learning journal content, identifying anecdotes, or AI-generated content resembling real children. Children's images are shared with parents only through Family, the approved parent-facing platform.

### **5.2 Share Confidential Information**

Including information relating to:

- children or families
- parents or carers
- staff
- admissions, funding, safeguarding, or internal nursery matters

### **5.3 Use Nursery Equipment for Personal Social Media**

Nursery-owned devices must not be used for personal browsing, posting, messaging, or managing personal accounts. (This aligns with the Mobile Phones & Digital Devices Policy.)

### **5.4 Contact Parents or Children via Personal Accounts**

Staff must not message parents or carers using personal accounts, accept or request friend or follow connections, or join parent-led WhatsApp or social media groups. Any pre-existing relationships must be declared to Head Office and managed transparently.

### **5.5 Post Content That Could Harm the Setting**

This includes negative commentary, misleading information, online arguments, or any content that undermines confidence in Peques.

### **5.6 Represent Peques Without Authorisation**

This includes negative commentary, misleading information, online arguments, or any content that undermines confidence in Peques.

### **5.7 Inappropriate Use of AI and the Peques Digital Platform**

Staff must not upload images of children to any AI tool; create, edit, analyse, or generate child-related content using AI; or use AI to communicate with parents or carers. Only the Peques Digital Platform, the approved internal system, may be used by staff for AI support, and only in accordance with the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, Policy 7. No external AI tool or internet-based AI service is permitted.

## 6. Acceptable Use

### 6.1 Official Peques Social Media

Official Peques accounts are managed by Head Office only and used for:

- nursery updates
- community engagement
- staff recruitment
- celebrations
- learning environment content
- other appropriate non-child-identifying content.

From 20 March 2026, Peques will not publish photographs or videos showing children's faces on any online platform, including the Peques website and social media channels. Only non-identifying images may be used, and only where appropriate parental consent has been obtained. Where any non-identifying image includes part of a child, such as hands, this must be used only with parental consent and only where the child cannot reasonably be identified.

Content published before 20 March 2026 may remain on existing Peques online platforms, subject to review by Head Office and removal where appropriate in response to safeguarding, privacy, reputational, or parental concerns.

### 6.2 Staff Personal Social Media

Staff may use personal social media provided that:

- no Peques-related content is shared
- confidentiality is maintained
- professional conduct is upheld

Staff are ambassadors for Peques both in and outside of work. Staff are ambassadors for Peques both in and outside of work and are expected to remain mindful that their online behaviour reflects their professional role and the values of Peques.

### 6.3 The Peques Digital Platform

The Peques Digital Platform may be used by authorised staff for planning

- administrative support
- non-identifiable, non-child-related content

All use must comply with the Peques AI Policy & Procedure.

## 7. Family - Approved Parent-Facing Platform

Family is the approved platform for sharing children's learning records, progress updates, images, communications, and key documentation with parents and carers. It is also used for admissions, capacity management, funding administration, invoicing, and policy distribution.

Content prepared or drafted using the Peques Digital Platform must be reviewed and finalised by a responsible member of staff before being uploaded to Family. Family is the parent-facing stage; the Peques Digital Platform is the internal staff support stage. The two are separate and distinct.

Parents and carers must:

- Access children's images and learning updates only through Family
- Not share screenshots or content from Family on social media or messaging platforms
- Not share content in which other children are identifiable

## 8. Parents and Carers - Social Media Expectations

### **8.1 Registration and Consent**

As part of the registration process, parents and carers agree not to post photographs or videos of other children online or on social media, and are informed that Peques does not publish identifiable images of children on any online platform, including the website and social media, where a child's face is visible. Parents may be asked to provide consent only for the limited use of non-identifying images, such as a child's hands, where the child cannot reasonably be identified.

Peques has adopted this approach in order to protect children's privacy, dignity, and digital footprint, recognising that young children are not able to provide informed consent to an online presence. Peques will always respect parental choice in relation to any permitted non-identifying nursery-related media.

### **8.2 Ongoing Expectations**

Parents and carers must not post group images or videos that include other children or staff, discuss nursery matters, staff, or children publicly online, or share confidential, misleading, or inaccurate information about Peques. Concerns must always be raised directly with the nursery management team. Breaches may result in permissions being withdrawn.

## 9. Messaging Applications and Online Groups

### 9.1 Staff

Staff must not join parent-led online groups, message parents or carers from personal accounts, or discuss children, families, or colleagues online. All communication must take place through approved nursery systems and channels only.

### 9.2 Parents

Parents must not create or use online groups to discuss nursery matters, name staff or children, or share confidential, misleading, or inaccurate information. Head Office will intervene where online behaviour becomes harmful, inappropriate, or damaging to the nursery community.

## 10. Images, Video and Digital Media

Only nursery-owned, centrally managed devices may be used to take photographs or videos of children on Peques premises. Images are shared with parents only through Family. Personal devices must never be used to capture images of children. Images must not be stored on personal cloud services. AI editing or enhancement of children's images is not permitted.

From 20 March 2026, no image or video showing a child's face may be published on any Peques online platform, including the website and social media channels. Only non-identifying images may be used on online platforms, and

only where appropriate parental consent has been obtained. Existing content published before this date is subject to ongoing review by Head Office.

## 11. Monitoring, Reporting and Response

Any concern relating to social media, networking, messaging misuse, unauthorised sharing, online conduct, confidentiality breach, AI misuse, or possible safeguarding risk must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

Where a concern relates to child safety, staff conduct, images of children, inappropriate communication, or any other safeguarding matter, it must be managed in line with the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure. All reports are treated confidentially and acted upon promptly.

## 11. Breaches of Policy

Breaches of this policy may be treated as a disciplinary matter, a safeguarding matter, or both. Serious breaches may be treated as gross misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, safeguarding escalation, or referral to external agencies where required.

## 13. Training and Review

This policy forms part of staff induction and ongoing training. Compliance is reviewed regularly and the policy is reviewed annually or sooner if guidance changes.

### **This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

- Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedure
- Confidentiality & Information Sharing Policy
- Online E-Safety Policy
- Mobile Phones & Digital Devices Policy
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy
- Company Code of Conduct Policy
- Partnership with Parents Policy
- Complaints Policy & Procedure
- Peques Privacy Notice

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**Review cycle:** Annually, or earlier where required due to legislative, regulatory, operational, or statutory changes.

**Approval route:** Head Office