

**Swindon Borough Council**  
**Fostering Service**  
**Foster Carers Social Media and Social Networks Policy**

To help you fully understand the implications of Facebook and other types of social networks and social media sites, Foster Carers should all attend Online Safety training provided by Swindon Borough Council.

Here are some general principles that all carers should adhere to:

- Do not upload any photos or videos of looked after children onto your Facebook or other social media account profile. Please remember, when you upload any information to the internet it no longer belongs to you and can be used by any individual. This also creates opportunities for individuals to contact people in care.
- Do not refer to any names of looked after children or locations you go to with them or activities you do with them. When anything is uploaded to the internet it is never removed (even if you take it down) this could lead to an inappropriate person identifying and locating a young person who is in care.
- Ensure your own children and other family members follow the same principles and do not upload any photos or videos of looked after children, refer to them by name or refer to activities and locations that you go to.
- Advise your friends not to upload photos or videos of looked after children.
- Do not refer to yourself as a foster carer on your Facebook profile or other social network sites. Such information can reach a large number of people very rapidly and once broadcast is beyond your control.
- Ensure that your privacy settings are set to “friend only” and “private”.
- If you or a member of your household has allegations made against you which are circulated on the internet report this immediately to your Supervising Social Worker.
- You should not accept a looked after child or their family as a friend unless you have discussed this with the child’s Social worker and your Supervising Social worker and they have agreed this. When you attach your profile to a young persons you are giving them and anyone attached to their account access to your profile and personal information.
- When a young person leaves your care it is good practice to ask them if they still want to remain “friends “ Due to the complex role of Fostering they may or may not want to remain “friends” and they have the right to their privacy.

If you are concerned about any information that you see about a young person or inappropriate behaviour including allegations you should report this immediately to your Supervising Social Worker and or the child’s Social Worker.