

**ARK HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD (ARK)**

**POLICY REF: HR40**

**Version 1.0 – March 2018**

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**1.0 ARK'S VALUES**

1.1 Our organisational values are the basis for everything that we do from providing housing, care and support to tenants and service users to ensuring safe recruitment processes. ARK believes that everyone should have the opportunity to lead a happy, healthy and safe life. We value:

- The worth of each person
- Trusting relationships
- Understanding difference
- Challenging oppression
- Personal and organisational accountability
- Caring for our physical environment
- Enjoyment

1.2 All ARK policies and procedures are underpinned by our values and we will ensure that they are applied consistently across the organisation.

**2.0 PURPOSE**

2.1 ARK recognises that the Internet provides a unique opportunity to participate in interactive discussions and share information using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. It is also useful way of interacting socially with colleagues and friends. While the organisation does not wish to discourage employees from accessing such sites on the internet, nonetheless it expects certain standards of conduct to be observed to protect both its legitimate business interests and its employees from the dangers of inappropriate use. This policy applies both inside and, in certain circumstances, outside the workplace. For example where ARK reputation was brought into disrepute or breach of SSSC Code of Conduct.

**3.0 SCOPE**

3.1 This policy applies to all employees including relief, volunteers, students, board members, contractors and agency within ARK.

3.2 It applies no matter whether that social media use takes place on or outwith company premises, whilst travelling for work or working from home.

Social media sites and services include but are not limited to;

- Popular social networks like Twitter and Facebook
- Photographic social networks like Flickr and Instagram
- Question and answer social networks like Quora
- Professional social networks like LinkedIn, Snapchat and Yammer

- Online review sites like Indeed

#### **4.0 ARK'S OFFICAL ACCOUNTS**

- 4.1 Use of any of ARK's corporate social networking site is for the purpose of sharing and disseminating information across the organisation.
- 4.2 Updating of ARK's corporate social networking site may be accessed only by authorised personnel.
- 4.3 Employees are encouraged to 'share' the contents of ARK's corporate site.

#### **5.0 PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

- 5.1 All employees are expected to behave appropriately and responsibly, and should be aware that they may be accountable to ARK for actions outside of their work.
- 5.2 Online conduct is the employee's responsibility, and it is important that employees are aware that posting information on social networking sites in a personal capacity cannot be entirely isolated from their working life.
- 5.3 ARK views any comment that is made on a social media site is made publicly, and that any inappropriate comment made, will be considered in the context of which it is made. For example, disparaging comments against a colleague made to all friends on Facebook could be viewed as bullying/harassment, or could be considered to bring ARK into disrepute.
- 5.4 Employees are advised to be mindful that all comments made through social media must meet the standards of the GDPR Regulations, the Employee Code of Conduct and the Equality and Diversity policy.
- 5.5 Employees may be accountable for actions outside of work, including making comments on social media sites, if that is contrary to any of ARK's policies, impacts on or compromises the employee's ability to undertake their role, or undermines management decisions. Such behaviour could be investigated and may result in disciplinary action being taken, and ultimately could result in dismissal.
- 5.6 Employees must not access social networking sites during working hours. Access using the organisation's IT systems is restricted to breaks and before and after the working day, unless specific permission is granted by the line manager.
- 5.7 Employees must not post information on a social networking or social media site which is confidential to ARK, fellow colleagues and Service Users.
- 5.8 Employees must refrain from making reference on a social networking/social media site to the organisation, its employees, Service Users and any external customers, suppliers and agencies unless it is of benefit to ARK eg sharing a job vacancy post, or participation posts.
- 5.9 Employees must not post entries on the corporate social networking site/a social networking site which are derogatory, defamatory, discriminatory or offensive in any way, or which could bring the organisation into disrepute.

- 5.10 Such posts as detailed in 5.9 will not be tolerated and the employee may be subject to ARK's disciplinary process.
- 5.11 Employees are encouraged to use social media to support ARK's Vision and Mission.
- 5.12 Employees are not permitted to post pictures of Service Users without prior permission from their line manager and guardians.
- 5.13 If you are concerned about someone else's behaviour online, you should take steps to raise your concerns. If these are work related you should inform your manager.
- 5.14 The above principles apply equally to information or comments posted by employees from their home (or other personal) computers and irrespective of whether the posts are done during working hours or in the employee's own personal time.

## **6.0 MONITORING AND USAGE**

- 6.1 The contents of ARKs ICT equipment and communications systems are and remain at all property of ARK. Therefore all employees and volunteers should have no expectation of privacy in any message, document, social media post, blog, discussion or any other information sent, received or stored on our ICT systems.
- 6.2 ARK reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, employee activities using ARK's ICT equipment and communication systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities. As an employee of ARK you consent to such monitoring by ARK regardless of your use of social media resources and system.
- 6.3 Employees may be required to remove social media postings that are deemed by ARK to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may, in itself, result in disciplinary action being taken.

## **7.0 DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

- 7.1 Employees whose conduct breaches this policy in any way will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with ARK's disciplinary procedure up to, and including, dismissal.
- 7.2 Videos, Photos and screen shots may be used in any disciplinary proceedings.
- 7.3 This following policies should also be read
  - G15 – Computer System Security, Email & Internet Policy
  - HR 18 Disciplinary
  - G48 Data Protection Procedure

<b>Approved by SLT in:</b>	<b>April 2018</b>
<b>Approved by Board of Management in:</b>	<b>June 2018</b>
<b>Approved by Unite:</b>	<b>May 2018</b>
<b>Next review of policy due by:</b>	<b>March 2021</b>