Appendix 3

**Use of Social Media and Streaming Apps to Communicate with Children, Young People and Families**

During the Covid-19 pandemic, practitioners need to be creative to maintain contact with our children, young people and their families. Whilst being pioneering, safeguarding concerns and data protection for practitioners and young people should remain paramount.

****Below are some guidelines to consider when using social media / online streaming apps to keep in contact with children, young people and their families.

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* All practitioners should adhere to professional standards when using online messaging platforms, video calls or live webcam sessions
* Practitioners should only use devices provided by Merton Council for work purposes. You should never use personal devices.
* For all video calls or live webcam sessions, practitioners must be suitably presented and dressed, as you would for a face-to-face visit.
* Video calls and live webcam sessions with children, young people and families should be undertaken in appropriate areas. Practitioners, children, young people and families should not make or receive video calls from their bedroom(s). Practitioners should ensure a neutral background and that there are no identifying features visible that might allow the practitioner’s home address to be identified.
* Children, young people and other members of the child’s family or household must wear suitable clothing for all video calls. Practitioners should politely and quickly terminate any video calls where children or family members are not appropriately dressed. Where this occurs the practitioner should inform their manager and record this on the child’s Mosaic record.
* Practitioner’s language must be professional and appropriate at all times. Children, young people and parents/carers, including any family members who may be in the background, should be informed about the use of appropriate language during the video call. Practitioners should make a judgement about politely terminating the video call where the child, young person or family’s language is abusive or offensive.
* Live contact should occur during the usual working day and be kept to a reasonable length of time to ensure the video call doesn’t prevent the child or family 'getting on' with their day
* All practitioners must continue to be aware of safeguarding obligations and to report safeguarding concerns if they arise during the video call.
* Practitioners need to reassure themselves that any software and/or platforms selected are suitable; raise no data protection or privacy issues and are within the provider's terms and conditions (for example, no business use of consumer products)