

**Tinies**<sup>™</sup>  
A whole world of childcare



## The Don'ts of Social Media - for Childcare Providers



**Social media may change, but it's here to stay. It is fun on a personal level - sharing what's going on in your life with friends and family - but it can be a minefield of trouble on the job.**

As social media becomes more and more prevalent in society, it's important to remember that - regardless of whether you're posting or tweeting or pinning - you're sharing information with an undetermined amount of people, and as soon as you post something you lose some elements of control.

*Here are a few social media don'ts to remember as you fulfil childcare jobs.*



## Permission

**Don't discuss your charges online without the permission of their parents or guardian**

Remember, sharing information about yourself is your own choice, but sharing information about others - especially minors - is the choice of their parents/ guardians and you should be clear about their preferences before you share anything.

Some parents will ask you to send them images of their children, but in any job make sure you have discussed social media with your employers and know/follow their rules at all times. However as a general rule, we advise you never share images or information about your charges or their family online.

## Safety

**Don't use mobile devices to access social media while you're watching children**

It's difficult to give your full attention to your charges if your eyes are glued to your screen. Remember it only takes a second for you to miss something vital.

**Don't use geo-tagging technology when taking photos of children or posting anything when you are with children**

Even when you don't realise it, you may be sharing information with the wider world when you post images or tag your location on social media.

If you are using a smart phone make sure you turn off the location function on your phone. When this is turned on it embeds coding into your images that include your exact location.

We don't like to think about it but people who prey on small children can use a variety of images to determine your usual route and favourite hangout spots - making it easier for them to find you and the children.

This can also be an issue if you are working for a family who are involved in a custody battle - it's better for all involved if you don't post your location.



## Watch Your Back

### Don't post anything on your wall that you don't want an employer (or potential employer) to see

More and more prospective employers will look at your online persona before hiring you - so think about that as you post content or tag yourself in those drunken photos from the weekend. We're not saying that you're expected to be prim and proper all the time, but if there's a general trend your perspective employer may form an opinion about you before they've had a chance to get to know you.

### Don't post your location or information about the family you are working for

Whether they are celebrities or the family next door, they don't deserve to have their dirty laundry aired in public and certainly not by someone who has signed contract - non disclosure or not.

### Don't post candid statuses that include references to your charges or their parents

Sadly, we've seen it happen. A status describing yourself as the child's mother, or slagging off the family may feel like your letting off steam or being funny, but ultimately you never know which friends of yours might happen to be friends of theirs. When these get back to the family, it's not only awkward, but depending on what you've posted it is potential grounds for dismissal.



### Don't add your employer or their children to your friends and followers unless you are aware of the ramifications

Adding Mum or Dad gives them access to your entire life. It may seem like a great idea at the time -you may even be friends with your boss and think it's cool - but you will always need to be on your best behaviour!

When it comes to your charges there is a level of responsibility that goes along with accepting a friend request. First of all, if they are under 17, they are technically not allowed to have an account, so that will be something they have to discuss with their parents.

If they have agreed we suggest you only agree to be their friend if they have also friended their parents. The reason for this is simple: if you see or read something that puts them in danger or a difficult situation, should you tell their parents?

If you do befriend them - and their parents don't have similar access - make it clear from the beginning that if you are concerned about something you will speak to them and then their parents, you don't want to open yourself up to the ramifications of keeping big secrets, such as under aged drinking or the posting of inappropriate photos.

All information and advice contained in this resource are meant as guidance only