**Remote Communications Protocol**

**Date Approved January 2021**

**Date for revision January 2022**

**Remote meetings via telephone or online platforms.**

In order to safeguard staff and comply with confidentiality agreements that are in place, staff are required to comply with the following protocol when communicating with families, Staff and all stakeholders.

Things to consider:

1. **Where is the meeting taking place?**

Staff should, wherever possible, be in a neutral area where nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard in the background.

Staff will “blur” backgrounds or remove identifiable object behind them (such as pictures of their children etc).

If the meeting/conversation is scheduled and sensitive information is discussed, ensure the conversation is in a private space.

If the meeting is not in a private space, staff members will wear headphones where possible.

If the meeting/conversation is unscheduled make sure that all members are aware of other people present in the room.

Meetings/conversations should take place within staff working hours.

Staff will not eat whilst on a call.

1. **Conduct expectations**

Staff must be dressed appropriately.

Staff should wear their lanyards for identification where possible and if they have not met the participants before.

Staff must maintain appropriate language and follow AfC professional expectations and guidelines.

1. **Which platform will you use?**

Always make sure the platform you are using is suitable and fit for purpose.

Staff will never use personal accounts/phones

It is recommended that AfC staff will use Google Meet for virtual meetings if hosting. Google Meet has end to end encryption

**Consent**

Staff will make sure all participants are aware of who is on the call/in the meeting and are aware of the environment you are working in. If there are any other people present, staff must ensure that all members on the call are aware and understand the mitigating factors put in place by the staff member to ensure the meeting is as private as possible within the individual setting.

**Child protection concerns**

* All staff have up to date safeguarding training and are aware of safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.
* Staff know the safeguarding measures to take if you are having a one-to-one conversation with a pupil.
* Staff know who to contact is they have any safeguarding concerns that involve a child.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Potential Risk** | **Measures to Mitigate Risk** |
| 1. Uninvited third-party overhearing the meeting and hearing/observing confidential information.
 | * Calls/Meetings to be conducted in as private a space within reasonable expectations.
* Google Meet automatically generates a meeting ID number rather than personal ID.
* Require users to access meeting with individual meeting ID.
* Wear a headset with microphone when any other individuals are in the same space.
* Put microphone on mute when not speaking
* Turn off video if screen is observable by people not in meeting
 |
| 1. Participants showing confidential or inappropriate content.
 | * Ensure that other confidential material is not observable when sharing your screen
 |
| 1. Video/audio recording of content without consent.
 | * Provide participants notice of intent to record and obtain consent.
 |
| 1. Disruptive or unruly participants.
 | * The host has the right to mute participants if necessary.
* If participants are unhappy with presence of uninvited individuals the meeting will be rearranged.
 |