

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services	Effective Date: June 1, 2011
	Section 14: Social Networking and Internet Usage	Version: 1

POLICY [NEW]

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will protect the confidentiality and safety of all children who have been removed from their parent, guardian or custodian and are under the care and supervision of the agency.

Children age 13 or older under the care and supervision of DCS who have been removed from their parent, guardian, or custodian may be permitted to use the Internet for social networking purposes. Children under the care and supervision of DCS will be appropriately supervised by the child’s resource parent and/or residential facility when using the Internet on any form of technology that has Internet capabilities (e.g. desk top computers, laptops, cellular phones, Ipads, Ipod touch).

Children under the care and supervision of DCS who have been removed from their parent, guardian, or custodian may not be pictured, described and/or identified as foster children in public/mass media (see related information) for any purpose, including recruitment, resource parent education, and public awareness without the consent of DCS. DCS will consent only if the following apply:

1. DCS has determined that such exposure will not be harmful to the child and will not result in exploitation of the child;
2. The child’s parent(s), guardian, or custodian(s) have signed a release;

Note: If Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) has been finalized, the release is not required.

3. The child if age 13 or older, has given written permission; and
4. The resource parents and/or residential facility agree to utilize privacy settings to restrict the general public from viewing their profiles or Internet sites.

Code References:
N/A

PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will ensure:

1. That parental and child consent is given prior to the use of social networking or internet sites.

2. That resource parents and/or residential facilities have been advised to seek permission from DCS prior to describing or placing any pictures of children under the care and supervision of DCS on any social networking or Internet sites.
3. That a conversation is held with resource parents and/or residential facilities regarding utilization of privacy settings to restrict the general public from viewing the social network profiles of children under the care and supervision of DCS or Internet sites in which such children may be represented or referenced.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Supervisory techniques to use when children will be using the Internet include, but are not limited to:

1. Utilizing the Child Family Team (CFT) Meeting process to address social networking and Internet usage with the CFT;
2. Checking the history of the websites viewed;
3. Using parental control tools (individual Internet service providers can provide guidance in this area);
4. Keeping the computer in a common or public area of the home;
5. Educating children and caregivers about not posting or sharing personal information about themselves online, as well as the consequences of doing so;
6. Prohibiting the posting of pictures with identifying information of children online (i.e names on jerseys, school information, letterman's jackets, location);
7. Informing children to advise his or her FCM or resource parent if someone makes any kind of contact with them that is sexual, unsolicited or threatening; and
8. Emphasizing no tolerance for any type of cyber bullying.

FORMS AND TOOLS

N/A

RELATED INFORMATION

Social Networking

Refers to online communities of individuals who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. This may include but is not limited to MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Public Mass Media

Refers collectively to all media technologies, including the Internet, television, newspapers, YouTube, and the radio which are used for mass communications.

Cyber Bullying

Refers to the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.