

## Online Safety and Social Media Policy

September 2022

- ✓ the terms learners apply to all apprentices.
- ✓ the term 'parent' applies to anyone with guardianship or caring and parental responsibility for the child
- ✓ the term 'staff' applies to members of staff and volunteers

### Our online safety statement

This policy provides guidance on how our organisation uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect the staff who work for us, and the learners and apprentices we support should behave online.

As an organisation, we commit to implementing this policy and addressing any concerns quickly and within these guidelines.

### Aims

The aims of our online safety policy are:

- ✓ to protect all learners involved with our organisation and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet) while in our care
- ✓ to provide staff with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents
- ✓ to ensure our organisation is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online

### Understanding the online world

As part of using the internet and social media, our organisation will:

- ✓ assess and manage the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff and learners when using websites, social media including Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter or Snapchat, apps and video conferencing platforms including Zoom or Skype
- ✓ be aware of how staff in our organisation and the learners they work with use social media both inside and outside of our setting
- ✓ ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines<sup>1</sup> when using social media or video conferencing platforms

- ✓ provide training for the staff responsible for managing our organisation's online presence
- ✓ regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including:
  - making sure concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are written into our reporting procedures
  - incorporating online bullying ('cyberbullying') in our anti-bullying policy

## Managing our online presence

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- ✓ all social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least 2 members of staff will have access to each account and password
- ✓ the account will be monitored by at least two designated members of staff in order to provide transparency, who will have been appointed by the organisations committee
- ✓ the designated staff managing our online presence will seek advice from our designated safeguarding lead to advise on safeguarding requirements
- ✓ designated staff will remove inappropriate posts by learners or staff, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the employer of any learners involved)
- ✓ we'll make sure learners are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about something that's happened online
- ✓ our account, page and event settings will be set to 'private' so that only invited members can see their content
- ✓ identifying details such as a learners name or telephone number shouldn't be posted on social media platforms
- ✓ any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims and tone as an organisation
- ✓ parents will be asked to give their approval for us to communicate with their children through social media, via video conferencing platforms or by any other means of communication
- ✓ parents will need to give permission for photographs or videos<sup>3</sup> of their child to be posted on social media
- ✓ video conferencing sessions will be password protected in order to maintain children's privacy and prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties

### What we expect of our staff

- ✓ staff should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
  - ✓ staff should seek the advice of the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
  - ✓ staff should communicate any messages they wish to send out to learners to the designated staff responsible for the organisation's online presence
  - ✓ staff should not communicate with learners via personal accounts
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- ✓ staff should not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using organisation accounts
- ✓ staff should make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate, as children may 'follow' them on social media
- ✓ rather than communicating with parents through personal social media accounts, staff should choose a more formal means of communication, such as face-to-face, in an email or in writing, or use an organisational account or website
- ✓ staff should avoid communicating with children via email or organisational social media outside of normal office hours
- ✓ emails or messages should maintain the organisations tone and be written in a professional manner, e.g. in the same way you would communicate with fellow professionals, avoiding kisses (X's) or using slang or inappropriate language
- ✓ staff should not delete any messages or communications sent to or from organisation accounts
- ✓ staff should undertake all online safety training offered and gain a basic knowledge of the platforms children use and how to report or remove inappropriate content online
- ✓ any concerns reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our reporting procedures
- ✓ at least one parent must be present during the delivery of any activities via video conferencing platforms at home
- ✓ any delivery of activities to children via video conferencing platforms will be supported by an additional member of staff (even if they're not actively delivering) to ensure transparency
- ✓ staff and children must not engage in 'sexting'<sup>4</sup> or send pictures to anyone that are obscene

### **What we expect of learners**

- ✓ learners should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms
- ✓ we expect learners behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in our acceptable use statement
- ✓ learners should follow the guidelines set out in our acceptable use statement<sup>5</sup> on all digital devices, including smart phones, tablets and consoles

### **What we expect of employers**

- ✓ employers should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms
- ✓ employers should protect all learners privacy online and think carefully about what content they share online, where they share it and who they're sharing it with
- ✓ we expect employers behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in our acceptable use statement.

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## Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate

When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger), we'll take the following precautions to ensure learners safety:

- ✓ a method of accountability will be arranged, such as copies of texts, messages or emails also being sent to another member of staff or to parents
- ✓ smartphone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy
- ✓ staff should have a separate phone from their personal one for any contact with learners and employers
- ✓ texts, emails or messages will be used for communicating information – such as reminding learners and employers about upcoming sessions – and not to engage in conversation
- ✓ if a learner misinterprets such communication and tries to engage a staff member in non apprenticeship conversation, the member of staff will take the following steps:
  - end the conversation or stop replying
  - suggest discussing the subject further at the next one to one session
  - inform the organisations lead safeguarding officer in the interest of transparency
  - if concerned about the learner, provide contact details for the organisations designated safeguarding lead or appropriate agencies and report any concerns using the organisations reporting procedures

## Using mobile phones during learning sessions

So that all learners can get the best from and actively take part in learning sessions, we discourage the use of mobile phones during such activities. As part of this policy we will:

- ✓ make children learners of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements with the organisation
- ✓ advise employers that it may not be possible to learners during sessions and provide a contact within the organisation who will be reachable should there be an emergency
- ✓ explain to learners how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their awareness of their environment, and their level of participation and achievement
- ✓

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