



Online Safety Policy

Ensuring a Safe Digital Environment for All Learners

Policy Date: 02/02/2025

Policy Renewal Date 02/02/2026

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices
- Provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety
- Ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices.

Policy Application:

The policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone involved in **Star Light Alternative Provision** activities.

Legal framework- This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. Summaries of the key legislation and guidance are available on:

- Online abuse
- Bullying
- Child protection

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind

- Children should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

We recognise that:

- The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges
- We have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
- We have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using the **Star Light** network and/or devices
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Safeguarding children who come from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
- Safeguarding /Deaf and disabled children and young people
- Safeguarding LGBTQ+ children and young people
- Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Appointing an Online Safety Officer – **Mr Adam Patterson**
- Providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our behaviour code for adults
- Supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- Supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- Developing an online safety agreement for use with young people and their parents or carers

- Developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child or young person
- Reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly
- Ensuring that user names, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively
- Ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- Ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given
- Providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- Examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:

- having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse)
- Providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying or cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- Making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account
- Reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term. Related policies and procedures This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:
 - Safeguarding and Child protection Policies
 - Dealing with allegations of abuse made against a child or young person
 - Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
 - Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
 - Anti-bullying policy and procedures
 - Photography and image sharing guidance.

E Safety in The Curriculum:

The growth of different electronic media in everyday life and an ever-developing variety of devices including PC's, tablets, laptops, mobile phones, webcams, gaming consoles, etc place an additional risk on our children. Internet chat rooms, discussion forums or social networks can all be used as a means of contacting children and young people with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. The anonymity of the internet allows adults, often pretending to be children, to have conversations with children and in some cases arrange to meet them. Access to abusive images is not a 'victimless' act as it has already involved the abuse of children. The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs of children and should be a concern to all those working with young people at this Provision. Young People can engage in or be a target of cyberbullying using a range of methods including text and instant messaging to reach their target. Mobile phones are also used to capture violent assaults of other children for circulation (happy slapping) or distributing indecent images of children (e.g. sexting). The Provision utilises the curriculum (particularly PSHE) to raise awareness of Safeguarding issues so that children are able to recognise the indicators of, for example, grooming behaviours, so that the risks of being drawn into sexual exploitation, or being subjected to abuse, are minimised.

In Order to Help Protect our Young People We Will Ensure:

- Software/blocks are in place to minimise access and to highlight anyone accessing inappropriate sites or information.
- Young people are encouraged to openly discuss their use of technology and anything which makes them feel uncomfortable. (If this results in child protection concerns the centre's Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed immediately)
- Young people should not give out their personal details, phone numbers, schools, home address, computer passwords etc.
- Young people and staff should adhere to the Provision policy on mobile phones. The police will be involved if there is any criminal element to misuse of the internet, mobile phones or any other form of electronic media.