

**Date of policy publication:** February 2025

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**Date of next review:** February 2026

**Policy review dates and changes:**

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| **Review Date** | **By Whom** | **Summary of Changes Made** | **Date Implemented** |
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**Online Safety Policy for Homeschoolers Academy**

**Introduction:**

At Homeschoolers Academy, we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our students while engaging in online learning. As an online business providing short courses to children, we understand the importance of creating a safe and secure learning environment where students can develop their skills and knowledge without being exposed to risks. This Online Safety Policy outlines our approach to safeguarding students' online experiences, protecting personal data, and promoting responsible digital behaviour.

**1. Online Safety and Safeguarding:**

Homeschoolers Academy recognises the potential risks associated with online learning, including cyberbullying, inappropriate content, online grooming, and exposure to harmful behaviour. We are dedicated to implementing measures that prevent these risks and provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. Our policy ensures that all staff and students are aware of the importance of online safety and are equipped to recognise and respond to potential issues.

**2. Safe Learning Environment:**

We will provide a secure platform for students to access learning materials and engage in courses. Access to course content will be password-protected, and we will monitor all online activity to ensure that students only interact with authorised individuals.

* **Communication:** All communication within the platform will be monitored by our staff. Students will be encouraged to communicate respectfully, and inappropriate language or behaviour will not be tolerated.
* **Live Sessions:** Any live sessions will be conducted through secure platforms, and students will only be invited to join classes with verified staff members. All live classes will have an adult supervisor or instructor present at all times.
* **Parental Engagement:** We encourage parents or guardians to remain involved in the online learning process. Parents will be informed about the nature of online activities and encouraged to discuss any concerns with our staff.

**3. Data Protection and Privacy:**

Homeschoolers Academy values the privacy and security of student data. We comply with data protection laws, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), to ensure that all personal information is handled with the utmost care.

* **Personal Data:** Students' personal information, such as names, contact details, and academic records, will be securely stored and only accessible by authorised staff members.
* **Data Retention:** We will retain student data only for as long as necessary to deliver the course and meet legal requirements. When data is no longer needed, it will be securely deleted.
* **Third-Party Tools:** If third-party tools or platforms are used for courses or communication, we ensure they comply with data protection regulations and that appropriate safeguards are in place.

**4. Cyberbullying and Inappropriate Behaviour:**

Homeschoolers Academy has a zero-tolerance policy towards cyberbullying, harassment, or any form of inappropriate behaviour. Students will be encouraged to report any instances of bullying or harmful behaviour they experience or witness.

* **Reporting Mechanism:** Students can report any concerns related to online safety to their course instructor or the safeguarding lead. We will act swiftly to investigate and resolve any reported incidents.
* **Consequences:** Any student found engaging in cyberbullying or inappropriate behaviour will face disciplinary action, which may include removal from courses or suspension from the platform.

**5. Online Safety Education:**

To promote responsible online behaviour, we provide online safety education as part of our curriculum. We aim to empower students to understand the importance of:

* Protecting their personal information online.
* Recognising and avoiding online risks, including cyberbullying, scams, and inappropriate content.
* Using the internet responsibly and respectfully.

**6. Monitoring and Reporting:**

Homeschoolers Academy regularly monitors online interactions within our platform and reviews course materials to ensure compliance with this policy. We encourage both staff and students to report any concerns about online safety to ensure that any issues are promptly addressed.

**Conclusion:**

Our Online Safety Policy is designed to create a secure, respectful, and enjoyable learning environment for all students. By following these guidelines, we aim to protect students from online risks, while supporting their learning and development in a digital age. Parents, students, and staff must work together to uphold this policy and ensure a safe and positive online learning experience.

**Policy Review:**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and to make any necessary updates in response to new risks or changes in legislation.