

E-Safety Policy

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Regulations and Standards:

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015:

- Regulation 12 - The protection of children standard.

The Serious Crime Act 2015

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1. Introduction:

The internet is an integral part of our lives, and children need to learn how to use it safely and effectively. The overarching emphasis of this policy, therefore, is to provide guidance on how carers can help Looked After Children achieve this.

"Children and young people need to be empowered to keep themselves safe – this isn't just about a top-down approach. Children will be children – pushing boundaries and taking risks. At a public swimming pool, we have gates, put up signs, have lifeguards and shallow ends, but we also teach children how to swim...

... just like in the offline world, no amount of effort to reduce potential risks to children will eliminate those risks completely. We cannot make the Internet completely safe. Because of



this, we must also build children's resilience to the material to which they may be exposed so that they have the confidence and skills to navigate these new media waters more safely".

Safer Children in a Digital World - Report of the Byron Review Executive Summary, March 2008.

2. Policy Guidance:

2.1 Risk Assessment:

The child's social worker should include internet use in the risk assessment when the young person enters a new placement. This will help to determine what the acceptable level of internet use is for that individual child and guide the process of setting up the agreements outlined below. Guidance and assessments / control measures should also be identified within each child's individual risk assessment.

2.2 Agreements:

Children placed with HND Children's Care Ltd should be inducted to the safe use of the internet, information should be relayed via our children's guide or a contract of expectations for example at the point of admission – guidance and expectations should be regularly reinforced.

A set of home internet rules, and a suitable risk assessment must be discussed and negotiated with the child. The rules should be relevant to the child's needs and the home's circumstances.

HND Children's Care Ltd home internet rules should set clear boundaries, using appropriate language, about what is expected of children whilst living in the home. These could include:

- Time limits.
- The type of sites or specific sites that the children are permitted or not permitted to use.
- Agreement to explain or show carers what they are doing online at any time.
- Any behaviour that is unacceptable e.g., bullying, gossiping.
- If the children accesses social networking sites, agreement to share who their online 'friends' are, ensure privacy settings are appropriately set and establish the type of activity that is acceptable.
- The need to tell someone if inappropriate content is accessed or they are upset by anyone while online.
- The need to ask before carrying out certain activities e.g., setting up an account on a games site, joining a social networking site.

It is recommended that the home internet rules are displayed or kept near to the device

that the child uses most frequently to access the Internet.

The home internet rules should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised at regular intervals.

3. Monitoring, Supervision and Encouraging Safe Use of the Internet:

It is recognised that children can access the internet in many ways and through a variety of devices that are not always easy to monitor or supervise. For this reason, staff cannot be expected to monitor and supervise all children's online activities. However, they must apply this policy wherever they are able.

- Staff may choose to prevent children's internet access on a temporary basis as a sanction / consequence. However, it is not usually acceptable for children to be prevented from accessing the Internet permanently. Children need to learn how to use the internet safely and take responsibility for their own safety. This is best achieved by providing guidance in the home environment.
- Staff and other professionals may on occasion prevent children access to the internet in order to keep them safe from harm, or to keep other children safe. This should be done as a part of an agreed plan. This may include confiscating equipment for a temporary period.
- Staff's role in helping children to learn how to use the internet safely is extremely important and they must ask for support and/or further training if they lack confidence in this area.
- If staff have any concerns about children's online activities, they should report it to the child's social worker.
- Staff and social workers need to be aware that most social networking sites impose age limits on their membership. Facebook, for example, currently denies membership to anyone under 13 years old. YouTube states that their site is not intended for under 13-year-olds to view and that members must be over 18 or have parental / guardian consent to add content to the site. It is therefore inappropriate for children under 13 years old to use social networking sites.
- Children who wish to post images of themselves on websites must be made aware of the risks involved. In some cases, it may not be safe for children to post images on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter. This must be assessed by the child's social worker on an individual basis.
- Social networking sites are often used by perpetrators as an easy way to access children for sexual abuse. In addition, radical and extremist groups may use social networking to attract children into rigid and narrow ideologies that are intolerant of diversity; this is similar to the grooming process and exploits the same vulnerabilities. The groups concerned include those linked to extreme Islamist, or Far Right / Neo Nazi ideologies, various paramilitary groups, extremist Animal Rights groups, and others who justify political, religious, sexist, or racist violence.



Prohibiting children from using social networking sites at home will not necessarily prevent them from accessing them elsewhere. A more effective way of helping to keep children and young people safe when using social networking sites is to:

- Ensure children set their privacy settings appropriately.
- Pay attention to what information children are posting; and
- Encourage children to share their social networking experiences with an appropriate adult.
- Encourage children to engage in discussions and education / training regarding internet safety. Internet abuse may also include online-bullying. This is when a child is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, or otherwise targeted by another child using the Internet and/or mobile devices. It is essentially behaviour between children, although it is possible for one victim to be bullied by many perpetrators. In any case of severe bullying, it may be appropriate to consider the behaviour as child abuse by another child.

It is expected that everyone in a position of trust who comes into contact with children using the internet exercises a 'professional curiosity'. It is only with an appropriate application of professional curiosity can we ensure that all is done to keep children safe on the internet.

4. Support, Training and Resources:

There are a wide range of organisations, which offer advice, support, and information on internet safety issues. Below is a short list of some of these resources.

[CEOP](#) -This is the web site of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), which delivers a multi-agency service dedicated to tackling the exploitation of children. It provides advice to parents, carers and children on Internet safety, an online reporting facility (Click CEOP) and the Thinkuknow web site (see below).

[Thinkuknow](#) -These resources help young people, parents and carers and teachers to learn about the risks that young people may encounter whilst using the Internet. Developed by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) the Thinkuknow web site also includes a facility for young people to report online abuse.

[Childnet International](#) - This web site provides a range of resources to help children and young people to use the internet constructively and to protect children from being exploited in the online environments provided by new technologies.

5. Protection and Action to be Taken:

Where there are concerns about a child being groomed, exposed to pornographic material, or contacted by someone inappropriately, via the Internet or other ICT tools like a mobile phone, the child's social worker should be informed.



The Serious Crime Act (2015) has introduced an offence of sexual communication with a child. This applies to an adult who communicates with a child and the communication is sexual or if it is intended to elicit from the child a communication which is sexual, and the adult reasonably believes the child to be under 16 years of age. The Act also amended the Sex Offences Act 2003, so it is now an offence for an adult to arrange to meet with someone under 16 for the purposes of committing a relevant offence having communicated with them on just one occasion (previously it was on at least two occasions).

Where there are concerns in relation to a child's exposure to extremist materials, the child's school may be able to provide advice and support: all schools are required to identify a Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who is the lead for safeguarding in relation to protecting individuals from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism.

Suspected online terrorist material can be reported through [GOV.UK - Report online material promoting terrorism or extremism](https://www.gov.uk/report-online-material-promoting-terrorism-or-extremism).

END.