

Our Free Minds

Internet, Technology and Media Safety Policy

Policy Aims

This Internet, Technology and Media Safety Policy takes into account the DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2019, and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018.

Our Free Minds CIO work with children and families includes using the tools of the culture such as the internet, computers and mobile devices, to explore the children's interests. The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people when 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.

The policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone involved in Our Free Minds' activities.

The issues classified within internet, technology and media safety are broadly categorised into three areas of risk:

1. **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
2. **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
3. **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm

Our Free Minds recognises that internet, technology and media safety is an essential part of safeguarding and acknowledges its duty to ensure that all students and staff are protected from potential harm.

Our Free Minds will empower our students to acquire the knowledge needed to use the internet, technology and other media in a safe, considered and respectful way, and develop their resilience so they can manage and respond to media risks appropriately.

Our Free Minds seeks to keep children and young people safe by:

- Appointing an online safety coordinator [this may or may not be the same person as your nominated child protection lead]
- 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 usernames, 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

Empowerment and Autonomy

Our Free Minds' internet safety certification programme is designed to equip young people with the knowledge and skills required to safely navigate the world of the internet, technology and media. This programme is based on ability not age and can be adapted to the needs of the young person. Upon completion of the certification programme students will have an awareness of the risks, responsibilities and procedures outlined in this policy.

In order to protect young people from the most harmful aspects of the internet and from accessing inappropriate content, Our Free Minds will filter and monitor access to a degree. This approach must be balanced however with our aim to provide young people with a 'real' experience of navigating the internet and media world from an early age, as this enables them to develop first hand the key skills required to do so safely.

Monitoring and Review

Technology evolves and changes rapidly. Our Free Minds will review this policy at least annually. The policy will also be revised following any national or local policy updates, any local child protection concerns and/or any changes to our technical infrastructure.

We will regularly review media use and evaluate safety mechanisms to ensure that this policy is consistently applied.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will report on media safety practice and incidents, including outcomes, on a regular basis to the Trustees and keep parents updated.

Any issues identified via monitoring policy compliance will be incorporated into our action planning.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is recognised as holding overall lead responsibility for media safety. However, Our Free Minds recognises that all members of the community have important roles and responsibilities to play with regards to media safety. As part of our democratic structure any member of the community may raise a safety or safeguarding issue either through a complaint to the facilitators, a note in the “Series of Unfortunate Events” box, or through a proposal or discussion at a Group Meeting. In this way Our Free Minds does not just give token responsibility to its students but empowers them with real responsibility and an equal voice in all matters including media safety.

Our Free Minds facilitators will:

- Create a whole community culture that incorporates media safety throughout all elements of community life,
- Ensure that media safety is viewed as a safeguarding issue and that practice is in line with national and local recommendations and requirements,
- Ensure the whole community is aware of the means by which they can raise and address media safety concerns - not just in theory but that they are practised at using these reporting channels as part of community life.
- Ensure that staff and students are proactively engaged in activities which promote media safety.

Our Free Minds leadership team and Board of Trustees will:

- Support staff to ensure that online safety is embedded within a progressive whole setting curriculum which enables all students to develop an appropriate understanding of media safety.
- Implement appropriate and up-to-date policies regarding media safety which address the acceptable use of technology, peer on peer abuse, use of social media and mobile technology.
- Support the Designated Safeguarding Lead by ensuring they have enough time and resources to carry out their responsibilities.
- Undertake appropriate risk assessments regarding the safe use of technology on site.
- Ensure that suitable and appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place.
- Manage external technical support in the implementation of technical media safety solutions where inhouse staff expertise is not sufficient.
- Audit and evaluate media safety practice to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Ensure all members of staff receive regular, up-to-date and appropriate media safety training and information as part of their induction and child protection training.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will:

- Act as a named point of contact within the setting on all media safeguarding issues
- Liaise with other members of staff on matters of media safety.
- Ensure appropriate referrals are made to relevant external partner agencies, as appropriate.

- Work alongside deputy DSLs to ensure media safety is recognised as part of the setting's safeguarding responsibilities, and that a coordinated whole community approach is implemented.
- Access regular and appropriate training and support to ensure they understand the unique risks associated with media safety and have the relevant and up-to-date knowledge required to keep students safe online.
- Access regular and appropriate training and support to ensure they recognise the additional risks that students with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online.
- Keep up-to-date with current research, legislation and trends regarding media safety and communicate this with the community, as appropriate.
- Work with staff to coordinate participation in local and national events to promote positive online behaviour, such as Safer Internet Day.
- Ensure that online safety is promoted to parents, carers and the wider community through a variety of channels and approaches.
- Maintain records of media safety concerns, as well as actions taken, as part of the settings safeguarding recording mechanisms.
- Monitor media safety incidents to identify gaps and trends and use this data to update the education response and setting policies and procedures.
- Report online safety concerns, as appropriate, to the Group Meeting and the Board of Trustees.
- Work with the Trustees to review and update media safety policies on a regular basis (at least annually) with stakeholder input.
- Report annually to all community members on updates and implementation of this policy and safeguarding measures.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to:

- Contribute to the development of our media safety policies.
- Read and adhere to our Internet, Technology and Media Safety Policy.
- Take responsibility for the security of IT systems and the electronic data they use or have access to.
- Model good practice when using technology with students.
- Maintain a professional level of conduct in their personal use of technology, both on and off site.
- Embody an 'education through practice' approach by embedding media safety education/information in all interactions with students where technology/media is being utilised.
- Have an awareness of a range of media safety issues and how they may be experienced by the students in their care.
- Identify media safety concerns and take appropriate action by following the school safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Know when and how to escalate media safety issues, including reporting to the DSL and signposting students and parents/carers to appropriate support, internally and externally.
- Take personal responsibility for professional development in this area.

It is the responsibility of students (at a level that is appropriate to their individual age, ability and media use) to:

- Seek an introduction to safe media use prior to using the internet or technology within the community, by way of certification.

- Complete the Our Free Minds safety training certification for Internet and Safe Media use.
- Engage in age/ability appropriate media safety education discussions.
- Contribute to the development of media safety policies and agreements.
- Read and adhere to agreements about the Internet, Technology and Media
- Respect the feelings and rights of others, on and offline.
- Take an appropriate level of responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe online.
- Seek help from a trusted adult, if they are concerned about anything they or others experience online or with any media.
- It is the responsibility of parents and carers to:
- Read and understand our approach to media use and safety.
- Seek help and support from the school or other appropriate agencies, if they or their child encounter media issues.
- Contribute to the development of our media safety policies by bringing our attention issues or concerns encountered at home.
- Take responsibility for their own awareness in relation to the risks and opportunities posed by the new and emerging technologies that their children access and use at home.

Useful Links

National Links and Resources for Settings, Students and Parents/carers

- CEOP:
 - o www.thinkuknow.co.uk
 - o www.ceop.police.uk
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): www.iwf.org.uk
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS):
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-council-for-internet-safety
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
 - o Professional Online Safety Helpline: www.saferinternet.org.uk/about/helpline to Report Harmful Content: <https://reportharmfulcontent.com>
- 360 Safe Self-Review tool for schools: www.360safe.org.uk
- Childnet: www.childnet.com
 - o Step Up Speak Up – Online Sexual Harassment Guidance: www.childnet.com/resources/step-up-speak-up/guidance-and-training-for-schools-and-professionals
 - o Cyberbullying Guidance: www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org
- Parent Zone: <https://parentzone.org.uk>
- Parent Info: <https://parentinfo.org>
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety
- o ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk
- o Net Aware: www.net-aware.org.uk
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation: www.lucyfaithfull.org
- The Marie Collins Foundation: www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk
- Action Fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk
- Get Safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org

Online safety coordinator

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Designated Safeguarding Lead

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This policy was adopted by: Our Free Minds	Last reviewed and signed by:
Date of last review: 21.9.2023 To be reviewed: 21.9.2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Katie Kotting, Chair of the Board of Trustees- Clea Sambrook, Trustee for Safeguarding- Mara Simmons, Trustee