

Gympanzees e-Safety Policy

Background

Recent advances of the internet, mobile phones and other electronic technology has made access to information and communication increasingly easy for everyone.

Safe CIC's research with 200 young people aged 10-13 years showed that 98% of young people can access the internet at home and that, in addition to research for homework, the majority use social networking sites like Facebook and TicTok etc, along with playing games and downloading music and videos. The majority use it in their bedrooms.

Many parents and carers struggle to get to grips with the concept and scope of electronic communication, especially the internet; and find the risks their children may face even more difficult to understand.

"All agencies providing services to children have a duty to understand eSafety issues, recognising their role in helping children stay safe online while also supporting adults who care for children" (Safeguarding Children in a Digital World)

What are e-Safety risks?

Children and young people with disabilities, as well as adults at risk and their parents/carers, spend more time than others on digital platforms as a consequence of their social isolation. This therefore increases their e-Safety risks.

Children/young people with learning difficulties have an increased vulnerability from their different social understanding which potentially makes them more likely to engage in 'risky' behaviours by failing to recognize dangerous scenarios.

Children are more likely to be bullied when they are vulnerable or different in some way. Research suggests that children with disabilities are three times more likely than their peers to be bullied. A survey by Mencap discovered that eight out of ten children with a learning disability have been bullied.

Safe CIC's research of 200 young people found there had been:

1. One death threat which had been dealt with by police
2. Two cases of serious bullying where a girl's identity had been misused maliciously
3. Adults who have had adverse comments posted on the internet by young people
4. Twenty children who had met a new internet 'friend' for real, without telling anyone where they were going, nor taking anyone with them
5. Ten of those new 'friends' did not look like the children thought they would.

Other risks may be:


6. Accessing age inappropriate, violent, sexual, suicide, anorexia, or illegal websites
7. Receiving unwanted or upsetting text or email messages or images
8. Being groomed by an adult with a view to meeting a young person for their own illegal purposes including sex, drugs or crime
9. Viewing or receiving socially unacceptable material such as inciting hatred or violence
10. Children and young people ignoring copyright law by downloading music, videos or even homework cheat material
11. A child or young person sending bullying messages or posting malicious details about others
12. Children or young people sharing explicit text messages or photos with other children and young people this is known as 'Sexting'

Minimizing Risks.

Best practice for all organisations is to have efficient filtering and monitoring systems in place to minimise risk to anyone using their internet and network. However, these systems can never be fully effective at eliminating all of the many emerging issues of abuse online including

In order to minimize the risks of misuse of electronic media while at Gympanzees all staff / volunteers will agree and sign up to our eSafety Code of Conduct:

1. use the internet and other forms of communication in a sensible and polite way.
2. only access websites, send messages or access and use other resources that will not hurt or upset anybody.
3. Gympanzees IT equipment will not be in an isolated place.
4. only use personal information or take photographs of other people in exceptional circumstances after discussion and permission from the eSafety lead/deputy, adhering to both of the Film & Photography and Confidentiality policies.
5. report any concerns to the Lead or Deputies for eSafety immediately.
6. be clear that we cannot maintain confidentiality if there is a concern about the welfare of a child, young person or adult at risk.



Gympanzees staff /volunteers will also be aware of the steps that families /carers can take to minimize the risk of the child/young adult/adult at risk coming to harm through electronic communications:

1. Talk to your children about what they are using, ask them to show you how everything works so you understand as well
2. Encourage your child to leave their mobile or tablet, etc. on charge in a family area when they go to bed
3. Discuss the risks of giving out personal details online and look at the privacy settings on your child's online accounts
4. Talk about how people can be anyone they want to be online: by using misleading email addresses, photos of other people, telling lies about their age, school and hobbies
5. Encourage your child to think carefully about the photographs and videos they put online. They can be used and tampered with by other people, or they may not be appropriate
6. Advise them to only text, chat or webcam with people they know in real life
7. Learn together how to identify spam messages and how to delete them. This also applies to messages from people they do not know.
8. Discuss how people hide their identities online and the importance of never meeting new online 'friends' for real
9. Make sure your children understand they can always talk to you about anything that makes them feel uncomfortable
10. Look on the internet together for the information about how to deal with or report a problem
11. Use a general family email address without the child's specific name
12. Talk about how, when information or images get on the internet, they can never be erased.

The Law – The Online Safety Act 2023

The Online Safety Act was not just about removing existing content, it was also about stopping it from appearing at all. The intention was to make platforms responsible for ensuring what appears on their sites is legal and appropriate. It also brought in new offences, including making content that promotes self-harm illegal.

Illegal content that platforms will need to remove includes:


1. Indecent images of children: Allowing them to be taken, possessed or distributed is a criminal act – includes those of sexting by the child. Causing a child under 16 to watch a sexual act is illegal.
2. Revenge porn.

3. Promoting self-harm.
4. Hate crime or inciting violence.
5. Offensive/ harmful messages: Sending grossly offensive or indecent messages that cause persistent annoyance inconvenience or anxiety is illegal. It is the sending not the impact that is illegal.
6. Trolling/Cyberbullying: Posting obscene, defamatory or upsetting comments, messages or information (often anonymous) that cause distress to the victim or their family.
7. Harassment: any activity that upsets others due to their protected characteristics.
8. Grooming: an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 if:
 - a. the offender has either met or communicated with the child on 2 previous occasions, and;
 - b. the offender must then either have met the child or travelled with the intention of meeting the child, and;
 - c. at the time the offender had the intention of committing a relevant sexual offence.
9. Abuse of Position of Trust: when a person engages in sexual activity with any person under 18 with whom they are in a Position of Trust e.g. youth worker, social care etc.
10. Hacking: gaining IT access without permission to cause damage or fraud.
11. Misuse of data: copying data, information, written works without the owner's permission.
12. Copying music, movies or software: it is an offence to copy and distribute without the copyright holder's permission.
13. Identity Fraud: pretending to be someone else or misuse of personal information. Financial fraud.
14. Trafficking: children who are bought and sold worldwide for any exploitation.
15. Selling weapons or illegal drugs.

Platforms also need to protect children from content that is not illegal but could be harmful or age inappropriate. These categories include:

1. pornographic content
2. content that does not meet a criminal threshold, but which promotes, encourages or provides instructions for suicide, self-harm or eating disorders
3. content that depicts or encourages serious violence
4. bullying content

Social Media companies will also be forced to use age assurance technologies to ensure their account holders are above their required minimum age (usually 13 yrs old).



Part of the legislation states that platforms must provide parents and children with clear and accessible ways to report problems online when they do arise, so any concerns need to be raised initially with the platform.

Ofcom can monitor the number of complaints and their outcome and can fine, take criminal action and remove revenue streams from non-complaint sites.

Behaviours that might cause concern

A child, young person or adult at risk who:

1. is becoming secretive about where they are going to or who they are meeting.
2. will not let you see what they are accessing online.
3. is using a webcam in a closed area, away from other people.
4. is accessing the web or using a mobile for long periods and at all hours
5. clears the computer history every time they use it.
6. receives unexpected money or gifts from people you don't know.
7. does not appear to have the money they should have.

A person who:

1. befriends a child, young person or adult at risk on the internet or by text messaging.
2. has links to unrelated children, young people and/or adults at risk on their social media pages especially if they work in a position of trust such as a sports coach or care worker.
3. is secretive about what they are doing and who they are meeting.

What to do if concerned

If you have any concerns, speak to the Lead or Deputies for Safeguarding immediately.

Remember:

1. do not delay.
2. do not investigate.
3. seek advice from the Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Officers
4. make careful recording of anything you observe or are told

If the concern is about:

1. a child being in imminent danger, ALWAYS DIAL 999 FOR THE POLICE.
2. the welfare of a child, the officers will ring the local children's social care services.
3. The welfare of an adult at risk, the officers will call the Local Safeguarding Adult Board.
4. a known person's sexual behaviour or intentions, ring the local police Tel:101
5. a person who has a "duty of care" towards children, young people or adults at risk in the organisation, ring the LADO.
6. an unknown person's sexual behaviour or intentions, report it to www.ceop.police.uk/safe-centre (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre)
7. harmful content, including child sexual abuse images or incitement to racial hatred content contact: www.iwf.org.uk

Summary

In order to implement this e-Safety policy our staff and volunteers will:

1. have an understanding of these issues
2. make sure children, young people and adults at risk understand they can always talk to us, or their parents and/or carers, about anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.
3. have the knowledge to signpost the children, young adults and adults at risk as well as their families or carers to agencies that can inform and support:
 - www.childline.org.uk Tel: 0800 1111
 - www.there4me.com
 - www.bullying.co.uk Tel: 0808 800 2222
 - www.thinkuknow.co.uk. (for concerns about bullying / hacking)
 - NSPCC Tel: 0800 800 5000

Summary of Actions

1. For immediate danger/crime – Dial 999
2. For concern about sexual abuse images (worldwide) or racial content (UK hosted) – contact Internet Watch Foundation www.iwf.org.uk
3. For an unknown person communicating with a child for sexual reasons – contact CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) www.ceop.police.uk
4. For a concern about a known person, non-sexual harassment or other potential crime – Contact local police Dial 101

Contact Information

e-Safety Status	Name and Position	Email Address	Contact Number
e-Safety Lead & Lead Person for Safeguarding: DSO	Stephanie Wheen (CEO & Founder)	steph@gympanzees.org	07773 553112
Deputy Person for Safeguarding: (Deputy DSO)	Fran Garland (COO)	fran@gympanzees.org	07795 687806
Deputy Person for Safeguarding: (Deputy DSO)	Emily Thorn (Assistant Ops Manager)	emily@gympanzees.org	07551 615969
Additional Lead for Safeguarding	Elizabeth Scholey (Trustee)	liz@gympanzees.org	07773 132748 0117 9683627

Children's Services:


LSCB (The Local Safeguarding Children Board)

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)

Area	Tel:	Out of Hours Tel:	LADO
Bristol LSCB /First Response	0117 903 6444	01454 615 165	0117 903 7795
South Glos LSCB	01454 866000 9am – 4.30pm	01454 615165	01454 868508

Adult Services:

Area	Tel:	Out of Hours Tel:
Bristol	0117 922 2700 Mon - Fri 9am - 4.30pm	01454 615165
South Glos	01454 868007 Mon - Fri 9am – 5pm	01454 615165



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