

Solutions Not Sides Online Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

This policy provides guidance on how Solutions Not Sides uses the internet and online platforms for delivering some of its programming, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect the staff and volunteers who work for us, and the children or young people who participate in our sessions, to behave online.

Aims

The aims of our online safety policy are:

- To protect all children and young people involved with Solutions Not Sides and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, tablets and laptops) while in our care
- To provide staff and volunteers with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents
- To ensure our organisation is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online

Understanding the online world

As part of using the internet and online platforms, Solutions Not Sides will:

- Understand the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff and children – when using websites, apps and other forms of digital communication
- Be aware that it doesn't matter what device is being used for digital interactions, but that the same safety aspects apply whether it is a mobile phone, tablet, laptop etc.
- Regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated including:
 - Making sure concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are written into our reporting procedures
 - Incorporating online bullying ('cyberbullying') in our harassment & bullying policy

- Provide training for the people responsible for managing Solutions Not Sides' online programming

Managing our online presence

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least three members of staff will have access to each account and password
- The accounts will be monitored by a designated person
- The designated person managing our online presence will seek advice from our designated safeguarding lead to advise of safeguarding requirements
- The designated supervisor will remove inappropriate posts by children or staff, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the teacher of any children involved)
- Identifying details such as a child's home address, school name or telephone number shouldn't be posted on social media platforms
- Any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims
- We will make sure children and young people are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about the running of the accounts
- We will always obtain permission via a child's school for photographs or videos of them to be posted on social media
- All of our accounts and email addresses will be appropriate and fit for purpose

What we expect of staff and volunteers

- All staff and volunteers will be made aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it (the word 'staff' will be used hereon in but all points also apply to volunteers)
- Staff should seek the advice of the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- Staff should communicate any messages they wish to send out to children and young people to the designated person responsible for Solutions Not Sides' online presence

- Staff must not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people from personal accounts on social media
- Staff should make sure any content posted is accurate and appropriate, as young people may 'follow' them on social media
- Staff should not communicate with young people via personal accounts or private messages
- Staff must not invite young people to a one-to-one conference or video call under any circumstances
- Rather than communicating with teachers through personal social media accounts, staff should choose a more formal means of communication, such as an email or use an organisational account, profile or website
- At least one other member of staff should be copied into any emails sent to children or young people
- Staff should avoid communicating with children or young people via email outside of normal office hours
- Emails to children or young people should be signed off in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols such as 'kisses' ('X's)
- Any disclosures of abuse reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as face-to-face disclosure, according to our safeguarding reporting procedures (see our Child and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy)
- Smartphone users should respect the privacy of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy
- Staff must not engage in '[sexting](#)' or send pictures to anyone that are obscene, indecent or menacing

What we expect of children and young people

- Teachers should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms in order to assist in enforcing the contents of this policy during online sessions
- Children and young people must not engage in '[sexting](#)' or send pictures to anyone that are obscene, indecent or menacing

- We will ask teachers to share the following safeguarding information with students and ask them to agree to this information prior to them engaging in our online sessions:

- I will be responsible for my behaviour when using the internet for Solutions Not Sides sessions, including the content I access and how I conduct myself
- I will not deliberately share material in a Solutions Not Sides online session that could be considered offensive or illegal
- I understand that I should only use Solutions Not Sides' official social media, email or website communication channels to contact them and should not seek out individual members of staff or speakers/volunteers
- I will not give out any of my personal information (such as name, age, address or telephone number online), or that of anyone else during a Solutions Not Sides online session
- I will not share my passwords with anyone else during a Solutions Not Sides online session
- I will not arrange to meet someone that I have met online unless accompanied by a teacher from my school or a parent
- I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe, and if they are not followed my teacher or my parents may be contacted
- I am aware that if I am experiencing bullying behaviour or abuse online, I can contact my school's Designated Safeguarding Lead
- I know I can contact Childline on 0800 11 11 if I have any worries about something I've seen or experienced online

Using mobile phones or any other digital technology to communicate

When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video, online conferencing or text (including texting, email and instant messaging), we will take the following precautions to ensure young people's safety:

- Staff will not request to have children's or young people's personal mobile numbers nor will they accept to have them if offered

- We will always contact children and young people via their schoolteacher; the purpose for each contact will be clearly identified and agreed upon
- We will ensure that schools have their students complete the Student Acknowledgement Form ahead of any online programmes.
- If a young person attempts to contact a staff member or volunteer and engage them in a conversation, the staff member or volunteer will take the following steps:
 - End the conversation or stop replying
 - Suggest discussing the subject further at a time and place with another responsible adult present
 - If concerned about the child or young person, provide contact details for the school's safeguarding lead or appropriate child welfare agencies
 - Staff will ensure that maximum privacy and security settings are enabled on any online conferencing platform that Solutions Not Sides may be using to conduct their online programming
 - Staff will ensure that teachers know they must sign into online sessions ten minutes before their students and will not allow students to enter the online conference space until their teacher is present
 - We will create session notes for each session and keep the notes for one year to ensure there is a record of the session
 - We will also save any chatroom activity and keep the record for one year
 - Wherever possible, we will record the whole session and keep the recording on file for one year

Solutions Not Sides is committed to implementing this policy and addressing any concerns quickly and within these guidelines.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in August.

This policy was reviewed in August 2022.