

Online Safety Policy



Table of changes

Date	Version	Summary of Amendments	Author
29.09.2020	1	n/a	JC
02.05.2021	2		JC
04.10.2021	3	Bullying content moved to separate policy	JC
10 May 2022	4	Change to CEE	JC
31 May 2023	5	Change to SEE.	JC

Context

This policy is to be read in conjunction with

- Anti-Bullying (including cyberbullying) policy

Definition of online abuse

The NSPCC define online abuse as any type of abuse that happens on the internet, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyberbullying (bullying that takes place using technology including social media sites, mobile phones, gaming sites), grooming (building an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking), sexual abuse, 'sexting' or youth produced imagery, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse from people they know as well as from strangers.

E-safety Statement

SEE is committed to the safeguarding and protection of our students whilst in the UK. For many young people these days, their online world is as important or even more so than their offline world. They chat, play, entertain themselves, shop, form relationships online. We feel that awareness of online safety is particularly relevant when working with exchange students because the young people in our care:

-are away from home and family

Date: 7 May 2024

24h emergency phone line: +44 (0)7796 997780

Review by: 7 May 2025

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Andrew Clifflin – Tel: 07850 332614 – andrew@southenglandexchange.org

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- do not initially have friends in the UK
- are in an environment in which they are not known, meaning that changes in their behaviour might not be noticed
- are especially keen to fit in where possible
- do not yet have a support network
- may be less likely to pick up on nuances in language
- may choose internet contact over more intimidating in person interaction
- may suddenly have more freedom than they are used to
- might have a host family which is hesitant to set boundaries
- could be less likely to ask for help

When talking of online activity, we are referring to Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Pinterest as well as online platforms, websites and online gaming.

Online risks

The potential risks include, but are not limited to:

Overuse of internet

An exchange experience requires resilience. Strength is reduced by lack of sleep which frequently occurs when a student is online late at night. Extensive online activity prevents integration which can cause a student to feel disappointed, isolated or even ashamed. Excessive time spent on the internet stops a student learning English which causes further frustration and difficulties in school.

Content

Web pages containing indecent images of children, promoting behaviour leading to eating disorders or self-harm present severe risk to many teenagers. Illegal, extreme or fake content (fake news, misogyny, anti-Semitism, racism, suicide and other) can cause distress. See also SEE's Anti-Radicalisation Policy.

Contact

The NSPCC define online abuse as any type of abuse that happens on the internet, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyberbullying (bullying that takes place using technology including social media sites, mobile phones, gaming sites), grooming (building an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking, with adults often posing as young people), sexual abuse, 'sexting' or youth produced imagery, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse from people they know as

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well as from strangers. Other forms of harmful contact include peer to peer pressure or commercial advertising.

Conduct

Students might not be aware that it is illegal to produce, possess or show indecent images of anyone under 18, whether consensual or not. A student sending an indecent picture of another minor will probably not, if discovered, be prosecuted, but they will almost certainly lose their school space and therefore have to leave the UK. Students regularly underestimate that sharing sexualised language and images is an offence at worst and a breaking of school policy at least. Students can also receive unwanted sexual or violent images or be manipulated and coerced into sending inappropriate images of themselves.

Commerce

Students can be exposed to online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing or financial scams.

Staff training

All staff new to SEE and all host families receive a copy of this policy. Staff and host families undergo safeguarding training which includes a training video on online safety. All training is renewed regularly. Updates are available in SEE's annual newsletter.

Possible signs that a student might be a victim of internet abuse:

Host families and staff must be aware of the existence of internet risks and informed to look for possible indications. It is natural and sometimes correct to feel that we have to respect the privacy of an exchange student more than we would that of our own children. It is also understandable that we feel we have less authority to set boundaries than natural parents would have. However, families should discuss with the student as well as the national manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead, Eve Crow (contact details below) if they notice any of the following symptoms:

- A change in behaviour or unusual behaviour
- Being upset after using the internet or their mobile phone
- Unwilling to talk or secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use
- Spending much more or much less time texting, gaming or using social media
- Many new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses appear on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet
- After texting or being online they may seem withdrawn, upset or angry
- Not wanting to go to school
- Difficulty sleeping
- Low self-esteem

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What to do if your student spends too much time online

Discuss with your student how much screen time is sensible. Be aware that they may be spending time online because they are too nervous about meeting people in real life. The situation may improve if they join a club or find friends at school.

What to do if your student is at risk online

Speak to your student. Any discovery or disclosure must be treated with respect. Expressions of shock, anger, accusations of ignorance, interrogation or emotional outbursts should be avoided.

Do not promise secrecy – safeguarding our students is the overriding principle.

Reassure your student and tell them that telling an adult was the right thing to do.

Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Eve Crow (07795 842565, eve@southenglandexchange.org) or her deputy, Andrew Cliffin (07850 332614, andrew@southenglandexchange.org) with any concerns or simply for advice.

Devices

All devices used by staff for work purposes are password protected. Staff are reminded not to share their passwords. Students and host families are encouraged to do the same.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually to keep step with the ever-evolving nature of online threats. Guidance will be sought from sources quoted in KCSIE part 2 including 360safe.org.uk.

Useful links for host families and students

Safer Internet Advice on screentime, safety online, social media, parental controls. Includes advice on cyber bullying, cyber flashing	https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers
Childnet	http://www.childnet-int.org/
Report harmful content	https://reportharmfulcontent.com/
ThinkUKnow	11-18s CEOP Education (thinkuknow.co.uk)
Internet Matters includes advice on specific games and apps, digital footprint, fake news	www.internetmatters.org

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