

ODCS Guidance for Safeguarding During Online Events

This guidance has been drawn up following advice given by NDCS and following advice on online events on the NSPCC website.

Online behaviour and codes of conduct

Volunteers should be aware of their digital footprint. Children, young people and families may look up the personal social media accounts of people who are working with them so these should be free of inappropriate or harmful content and not provide any personal information such as personal email addresses or phone numbers. It is best practice for volunteers not to accept friend requests on their personal accounts from children they work with.

Online code of conduct for adults

You should always:

- Use accounts that have been authorised by NDCS/ODCS to communicate with children and young people (never use personal accounts)
- Turn on privacy settings on accounts that are used to interact with children and young people
- Ensure all communications are relevant to the work of the project and organisation
- Use age-appropriate language.

Privacy and consent

If you're planning to use the internet to provide or host activities that involves direct interaction with children online, **you will need written consent for children to be involved**. You should get this from parents, carers and the children themselves as appropriate. Explain exactly what the activity is, why it needs to happen online and what the benefits and risks are. **Young people and their parents should also sign the ODCS online safety agreement for young people.**

You should consider when and whether it is appropriate to allow children to share pictures or videos of themselves. If it is appropriate for the activity, then you should get permission from children and their parents.

Responding to concerns

If there are any concerns about a child's safety online, or if a child says anything online that raises concerns about their wellbeing, you should report it to the safeguarding lead as soon as possible, or to the police if there is an immediate danger to the child.

Online communities

Make sure the children, young people and volunteers in your online community know who to talk to if they see or hear anything upsetting or inappropriate. This is covered in the online safety agreement. As well as following our safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, there are specific safeguarding measures that you need to consider if you run an online community.

Things to consider when setting up an online community

Who can join the community?

Set an age range and consider how you will check that community members are the right age.

Where will the community be hosted?

Consider which platform will best keep children safe from abuse and keep their interactions private. Make sure the platform you're using is appropriate for the age group you're targeting and that your organisation has the capacity to maintain it properly.

What information can be shared?

Setting up your community as an online site or forum may allow you to have more control over the level of personal information that is visible to others. Encourage parents, carers and children to turn on privacy and security settings on all online accounts. They can call the O2 NSPCC Advice Line on 0808 800 5002 for further support on how to set up parental controls and privacy settings.

How will the community be moderated?

To make sure children are not exposed to harmful or inappropriate content you will need to moderate your community. This means checking and reviewing what people are posting to assess whether children may be at risk. To moderate effectively, you should:

- Publish clear guidance on what is and is not allowed to be posted (see the online safety agreement)
- Establish when posts will be moderated, for instance whether they are reviewed before or after they go live
- Decide when children will be able to post and submit content
- Familiarise yourself with the language children use so that you understand whether the language may be inappropriate or harmful.

Livestreaming

Livestreaming can be used to broadcast events or activities to children and young people in real time, from anywhere and at any time. Children may be able to participate in the stream or choose to watch. Some livestreams can also be saved and kept on social media platforms to view later.

Hosting a livestream

Hosting a livestream means any situation where you instigate, publish and are responsible for streaming online content.

- As with all gatherings involving under 18s we will make sure there are a minimum of 2 adults present before the children/young people arrive (the 2 adults must not be related).
- Advanced notification should be given to the Committee or Safeguarding Lead of the date and time of any meetings planned by team members (as per the current protocol). They will keep a record of this information plus any meetings they organise.
- A register will be kept by the host of attendees (including children/young people, leaders and 'visitors').
- Parents will be informed when meetings will take place. Parents will be given a copy of these guidelines.
- Young people will be issued with an online safety agreement to sign with their parents and informed who to talk to if they are concerned.
- Permission must be obtained for each young person to attend. Ask the parents to specify which email address to use for video calling.
- Even if a participating child can't be seen in your stream there may still be identifying information such as their name, email address or a link to their social media account. Never reveal the full identity of individual participants and keep any identifying information private. Be particularly sensitive to the needs of those who may have child protection concerns.
- Consider how to make sure your livestream only includes the people you've invited. For example, you might be able to ask your audience to register to watch the stream and issue a log in and password. Or you could look into using a custom platform if you regularly livestream.
- Consider which platform to use. Some free platforms such as YouTube or Facebook Live do not allow you to restrict the audience. Zoom is therefore recommended for online meetings. Zoom allows for conversation at the side, either to everyone or to an individual. This is a tool that can be used for games etc. Leaders should be wary of how they use this chat. Chat should be shut down if it gets out of hand. All leaders present in the video conference should save and keep a copy of the chat. Zoom also allows for file sharing. This should be set so the host is the only one who can share files. Be very careful about what files you are sharing with the group. It would be wise to close all other files before you make the call.
- Be aware of and sensitive to technical difficulties. Make sure your connection is fully terminated at the end of the call to avoid inadvertently saying something you wouldn't want the young people to hear. It is recommended that leaders should test 'Zoom' before using it.
- After the meeting (either group or phone) make a note of the chat and what topics were covered. Also make note of anything out of the ordinary. Follow the usual safeguarding procedures for anything concerning and GDPR guidelines for recording information.
- Be sensitive to the needs of individual children, for example those who may be sensitive to particular topics or issues that may arise during the livestream.

- Make sure the platform you're using is accessible to deaf and disabled children. For example, you could use screen readers or subtitling. As always, be inclusive – are there any young people from your group who would struggle to participate in this way? Think about what extra support can be put in place for them, within these and our safeguarding guidelines.
- If you're appearing in the livestream, make sure your surroundings and environment are appropriate.
- No person (adult, child or young person) should take part in the video conferencing from a bathroom, and participation from a bedroom is discouraged. If a participant must take part from their bedroom due to conflicting domestic requirements, they are encouraged to maintain their privacy, for example by the use of blurred or virtual backgrounds, or a draped sheet. All people in the call should be suitably dressed.
- There is a possibility that parents who don't have a DBS may be in the video conference. This is unavoidable so should be dealt with in the same way as an occasional visitor to a group. Their names will be put on the register and they will not have access to data about the young people apart from their names.
- As per GDPR rules social events via livestreaming should NOT be recorded.