

Safeguarding Guidance – Online Learning

Online learning is a great way to keep in touch with clients and help maintain knowledge whilst they are unable to attend your centre. We have a few suggestions on how to keep your clients, your staff and yourself safe.

More safeguarding advice is available www.bhs.org.uk/safeguardingchildren

Before You Start

One of the key aspects of making this process useful and informative is to plan and prepare what you are going to do. Technology as we all know can sometimes be temperamental so firstly practice what you are going to do with a staff or family member. Consider:-

- Re-visiting your e-safety policy, does it cover the current scenario. A BHS template is available on the website and you can amend this as required.
- Making sure your codes of conduct for staff and participants are up to date and cover online learning. Re-issue as required.
- Getting consent from children and from their parent/guardian – you may need to update this to cover online learning.
- What platform you are going to use? What features does it have? Is it suitable for the age group you are using it for? Net aware <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/> has a comprehensive list of apps and social networking sites and explains security risks for each of them.
- Are there any insurance implications that may require you to update risk assessment or seek permissions from your insurance broker?

Keeping Parents and Children Up To Date

Before you start online learning make sure you communicate with the participants and their parent/guardian what they can expect. You may also need to:-

- Find out about any specific needs or requirements.
- Make sure parents/guardians are available during the sessions.
- Let them know specific times of training and what it will cover.
- Let children and their parents/guardians know what to do if they are concerned about something during online learning i.e. who they can report something to.
- Encourage children and their parents/guardians to look at the e-safety guidance -either the BHS version or the Children's Commissioner guidance (please see link below).

Live Streaming or Video Calling

If you decide to live stream or video call with participants there are a few extra elements to consider:-

- Make sure you are in an open neutral environment; consider the background and the clothes you are wearing. On some apps/sites you can blur the background.
- Try to opt for sites/apps that offer password protection and operate on an invite only basis. This will prevent non-invited parties entering the meeting.

- Only invite participants that you know.
- Check whether the site/app records the meeting and use the settings to switch off where possible. If you must record the session you must have prior consent from those involved.
- Check your operating system is up to date and improve settings by blocking location and applying safe mode (this will block some pop ups).
- Be aware of one to one scenarios and what extra steps you may need to take.

Contacting Children

In order to organise online learning, you will need to get in touch with participants. The same procedures for your normal contact methods should apply, consider:-

- Using business accounts for social media and business phone lines/mobiles.
- Communicate via parents on email and phone.
- Remember to check you are adhering to the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Adhere to your e-safety policy.

Reminders for Staff

If you are asking staff to deliver online training, make sure you:-

- Check their code of conduct covers online teaching and make any necessary adjustments.
- Make sure they are aware of the extra safeguarding elements with online learning - you could ask them access online e-safety training, NSPCC training link below.

What to do if you have a Concern

The current situation has placed all families in close quarters and for some this could be a difficult time. Children will be using the online world to stay in touch with friends and to occupy themselves. This brings extra risks and it is important you are vigilant to any changes in behaviour or if you notice anything that concerns you.

If you are worried, get in touch with someone:

- If you think that a child, young person or adult at risk is in **immediate danger** contact the **Police on 999**.
- If a child, young person or adult at risk needs **immediate medical attention, call an ambulance** and tell the paramedics that there is a safeguarding concern.
- If you have a concern about the **welfare of a child**, young person or adult at risk or the **behaviour of an adult** towards a child, young person or adult at risk, you must refer it to your local **Social Services** or **Adult Social Care**.
- If you are concerned that **someone may be behaving inappropriately or seeking to groom a child in an online** environment, then please use the **CEOP reporting button** to report directly to the National Crime Agency <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>
- If you are in danger and unable to talk on the phone, call 999, and then press 55. This will transfer your call to the relevant police force who will assist you without you having to speak.
- Contact the BHS Safeguarding Team on 02476 840746 (limited hours, every day Monday-Friday).

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Children and young people may be worried about the impact of coronavirus, social distancing or self-isolation. Those who already have mental health difficulties such as anxiety might be finding things particularly tough. Talk to them about what's happening, check how they're feeling and keep them as well informed as you can.

Tell children and young people where they can go if they are worried about anything or need to talk to someone while school is closed.

Childline provides a range of online tools that young people might find helpful:

- information about [coronavirus](#).
- [Calm Zone](#) – activities to help let go of stress.
- [games](#) to help take your mind off things.
- [information](#) and advice on a range of topics including feelings, relationships, family and schools.
- peer support [message boards](#).
- [Childline Kids](#), our website for under 12s.

Childline can also give confidential help and advice. Calls to 0800 1111 are free or children can get support online.

Further Information

The Child Protection in Sport Unit guidance on virtual learning <https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/best-practice/remote-teaching-and-coaching/>

NSPCC teaching remotely advice <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2020/march/undertaking-remote-teaching-safely>

NSPCC online safety hub <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

BHS e-safety policies and guidance including codes of conduct www.bhs.org.uk/safeguardingchildren

For parents and children

A very useful guide to send to children and parents in advance:-

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/coronavirus/digital-safety-and-wellbeing-kit/>

Training

The NSPCC offer online training in e-safety:-

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/online-safety>

Extracts taken from Childline website and CPSU.