



Defend Digital Me Group
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defend digital me.org

Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
Statement for project partners, young people and families we work with

Principles

Across the digital environment in state education in England and Wales we want every use of data to be in a rights respecting system, built on safe, fair, transparent policy and practice. We expect the same of ourselves and partners when working directly with children or vulnerable adults in an offline or online environment. We take our responsibility to ensure the actively consider the safeguarding of children both seriously and consciously.

Every child has equal rights to protection and to have their privacy, wellbeing and participation promoted in pursuit of their full and free development and human dignity, and in ways that are clearly understood by them.

All actions regarding child safeguarding must be taken in the best interests of children. This includes an understanding that in all our work streams and activities we must ensure that we respect children's rights and do not cause harm, or risk of harm.

We maintain confidentiality and do not disclose identifying personal details of those involved in any activities without express consent and in only necessary and proportionate ways, and in a professional context. We will never ask to discuss or disclose child protection concerns, including the names of those raising concerns. Where it is necessary to pass on information to ensure that a child is protected or treated appropriately during or after activities (for example where a child may have physical or mental health needs that are relevant for the activities and staff need to know, or may require specialist support or legal advice) we will put their welfare above all, based on professional judgement and the best available information and circumstances at the time.

We defer to partner organisations' safeguarding and welfare policies where children and young people engage with defend digital me as a result of first engaging with the partner.

We expect any contracted third parties that we bring into contact with children and young people at a partner organisation to maintain a distanced third-party professional relationship, liaising through defend digital me unless otherwise agreed with both defend digital me and the partner organisation, and to agree to our Code as set out here, and to meet any expectations and standards of the partner organisation as well.

Requirements

All defend digital me contracted organisations and individuals that work with children and young people or vulnerable adults are required to have a current, active child safeguarding policy on interactions with with children, young people or vulnerable adults, and are asked to

be able to demonstrate the following:

- A thorough understanding of safeguarding issues and related obligations in law;
- An up to date safeguarding policy and procedures including on;
 - Good practice on safeguarding issues;
 - The necessary level of checks for relevant staff who engage with children or vulnerable adults eg: Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks;
- Promote a culture of respect for rights, empathy, openness and transparency;
- To work in partnership and liaise with safeguarding services should needs arise.

Our Staff and partners

defend digital me staff do not work directly with children, young people or vulnerable adults as part of their everyday jobs and therefore do not have Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks as standard. However, when staff, including contracted staff, work with children at partner organisations or individuals and families at events, staff will be expected to have DBS checks. Those without DBS checks will never be left unsupervised or in sole charge of children, young people or vulnerable adults when working with defend digital me and any of their partner organisations and must decline to do so if asked.

We expect all adults we work with to apply child-friendly, and inclusive communication with children, taking into consideration that, in particular but not only when using online platforms, non-verbal cues through body language or facial expressions are difficult to communicate, observe, and receive; and written communication, through chat or typed messages, has risks of being misinterpreted due to the absence of non-verbal cues.

If we identify or are informed of an allegation or an issue of concern

If we receive an allegation in good faith or identify an issue of concern ourselves and believe that children, young people or vulnerable adults may be at risk, we will work with the safeguarding lead in the Partner organisation and/or appropriate authorities. When any form of complaint is made against a contracted member of staff, it must be taken seriously and the complaint should initially be dealt with by the most senior defend digital me staff member present at the time the complaint is made. If the complaint is against the most senior member of staff then the other company directors must be informed. The internal reporting procedure is through the Company Directors and are expected to take action to resolve the issue and where necessary involve law enforcement or child support services.

Senior Management Team

Name	Role	Contact	DBS checked
Jen Persson	Director	jen@defend digital me.org	2020
Pippa King	Director	directors@defend digital me.org	
Richard Gomer	Director	directors@defend digital me.org	

Code of Conduct working with defend digital me

I agree that I will

1. Adhere to the defend digital me Child Safeguarding Policy;
2. Contribute to creating a safe, inclusive, and gender-sensitive environment that is free from discrimination and violence against children, including neglect, and physical, mental, and sexual exploitation and abuse;
3. Treat children with respect and dignity and consider their best interests, irrespective of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, health, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, family composition, class, or other status;
4. Help children to take part in decisions which concern them according to their level of maturity and capacity;
5. Listen to children's voices, give due weight to their ideas and opinions, and empower them so that they learn about and are able to exercise their rights;
6. Only address children and young people in an open and transparent manner and when online, never by private chat function;
7. Be a positive role model to children and young people by displaying appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
8. Respect the children's privacy and confidentiality;
9. Never take children's photos or make recordings of videos, without prior discussion and permissions from families arranged indirectly through defend digital me and the partner youth organisation;
10. Inform children and communities of their right to report any worrying situations and how they can raise a concern;
11. Raise any concerns, problems, or issues pertaining to child safety and well-being with the defend digital me Child Safeguarding Team as soon as possible;
12. Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations of discrimination and violence against children or inappropriate conduct;
13. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999 or report a crime on 101.

I agree that I will not

14. Represent children as victims (weak, powerless, unassisted, desperate, etc.);
15. Publish a story or image which may identify or endanger the child, their family or community;
16. Tolerate abusive behaviour and language, violence, aggression, bullying or discrimination in any online activities. Leaders will respond quickly and effectively to such reports which may result in the participant(s) being suspended from the event;
17. Communicate with children or young people using private chat functions during video conferencing;
18. Maintain contact with partner organisations, unless a specific defend digital me project requires me to do so and I have been given express permission from defend digital me and/or the Partner organisation;
19. Maintain direct contact with children or their families after events arranged in cooperation with defend digital me and the Partner organisation;
20. Breach professional confidence involving organisations, children or young people.

Glossary

- **“Child”** refers to any person below 18 years old, as defined by Article 1 of the UN CRC, irrespective of the age of majority in their country, or the country where they are located or living
- **“Child Safeguarding”** refers to the responsibility to make sure staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children. That they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authority. This includes both preventative actions to minimise the chances of harm, abuse and discrimination occurring, and responsive actions to ensure that incidents which may happen are appropriately handled. Safeguarding implies a wider duty of care towards children rather than just upholding their right to protection (as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) – but it is primarily concerned with harm and wellbeing, rather than with the promotion and protection of child rights generally.
- **“Child Safeguarding Team”** refers to the designated group of individuals to receive child safeguarding concerns or complaints during the conduct of the activities involving children.
- **“Discrimination”** refers to the unjust treatment of children on the basis of the children's or their family’s race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, health, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, family composition, class, or other status.
- **“Violence against Children”** refers to all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, maltreatment, or exploitation, whether accepted as ‘tradition’ or disguised as ‘discipline.’ It can be in any of the following forms:
 - “Physical Violence” or the deliberate use of force with children
 - “Mental Violence” or psychological maltreatment, mental–, verbal–, and emotional abuse including repeated inappropriate remarks
 - “Sexual Violence” activity or attempted activity imposed by anyone on a child, including inducement or coercion of the child to engage in any unlawful or psychologically harmful sexual activity and sexual exploitation and abuse
 - “Neglect/Negligent Treatment” or the failure to meet the children’s needs, to protect them from danger, and to obtain services for children.
- **“Young person”** refers to any person older than 18 and below 26 years of age.

Review and Maintenance of Policy

- The Senior Management Team shall undertake to review this policy, its implementation and effectiveness annually;
- Any new legislation or developments in existing legislation will be considered as and when required and the policy will be updated to reflect these developments.

Last updated: March 2022