

E-Safety / Online Safety Policy

Equip Education's Online Safety Policy has been drafted on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance - relating to Online Abuse, Bullying, Child Protection and Adults at Risk Protection - that seeks to protect children, young people and adults at risk within England and Wales.

Policy Statement

Equip Education believes that all children, young people and adults at risk should never experience abuse of any kind; and that whilst they should all be able to use the internet for education and personal development, safeguards need to be in place to ensure that they are kept safe at all times. Accordingly, Equip Education will take all appropriate steps to keep children, young people and adults at risk (as well as our staff and volunteers) safe when they are online.

Purpose of this policy

The purpose of Equip Education's Online Safety Policy is to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk - whenever they are making use of the internet, social media, generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools and/or mobile devices
- Provide Equip Education staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide the organisation's approach to online safety
- Ensure that Equip Education always operates within the law - and in line with our values - in relation to how we use online devices.

Equip Education's Online Safety Policy applies to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and adults at risk - as well as to anyone else who is involved in Equip Education's activities.

Principles of this policy

Principles	Equip Education recognises that:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Although the online world provides everyone with many opportunities, it can also present risks and challenges▪ Equip Education have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults at risk - and anyone else who is involved in the work of our organisation (including Equip Education staff and volunteers) - are protected from potential harm online▪ Equip Education have a responsibility to help keep children, young people and adults at risk safe online - whether or not they are using Equip Education's network and/or devices▪ Only by working in partnership with children, young people, adults at risk - as well as their parents, carers and other agencies - will it be possible to promote their welfare and help them to be responsible in their approach to online safety▪ All children, young people and adults at risk - regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation - have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

In developing this Online Safety Policy, Equip Education also understands and acknowledges that the use of information technology is:

- An essential part of everyone's lives
- How Equip Education gathers and stores information
- How we all communicate with each other
- An intrinsic part of the experience of the children, young people and adults at risk who use Equip Education's services
- Greatly beneficial to all.

How Equip Education will seek to ensure online safety

Notwithstanding the above positives benefits of using information technology, Equip Education also understands that it can present challenges in terms of how it is used responsibly and - if misused either by a child, young person or adult at risk, or for that matter by any other person - can actually (or potentially) be harmful to them. Therefore, Equip Education will seek to ensure online safety by undertaking the following:	
a.	Appointing an Online Safety Coordinator .
b.	Providing clear and specific directions - to Equip Education staff and volunteers - on how to behave online through our Code of Conduct for Staff, Code of Conduct for Adult Participants, Parents, Families, Carers & Spectators, Code of Good Safeguarding Practice when Working with Children and Code of Good Safeguarding Practice when Working with Adults at Risk .
c.	Supporting and encouraging all children, young people and adults at risk - who are using Equip Education's services - to use the internet, social media and mobile phones etc. in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others.
d.	Supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe when they are online.
e.	Developing an Online Safety Agreement for use with children, young people and adults at risk - as well as with their parents and/or carers.
f.	Developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour - whether by an adult or a child, young person or adult at risk.
g.	Reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly.
h.	Ensuring that user names, logins, email accounts and passwords are all used effectively.
i.	Ensuring personal information about children, young people and adults at risk - who are involved in our organisation - is held securely and shared only as appropriate.
j.	Ensuring that images of children, young people, adults at risk - and their families - are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given.
k.	Providing supervision, support and training for Equip Education staff and volunteers about online safety.
l.	Examining and risk assessing any social media platforms - which includes generative AI tools and new technologies - before they are used within Equip Education.

Risks assessing online platforms

Each online platform has its own set of benefits, and risks. The **Online Safety Act** places **legal duties and responsibilities on the online service providers themselves** - to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe, when they are online and using their platforms.

However, Equip Education also has a duty to ensure that the organisation has **properly risk assessed** any online platform that children, young people and adults at risk will have access to. When the organisation carries out its online platform risk assessments, Equip Education will always keep in mind the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the children, young people and adults at risk that access the organisation's activities.

Further information relating to how Equip Education provides support - as well as how it will respond to issues - can be found within the section titled Child Abuse: Online Abuse, within this Safeguarding Handbook.

Filtering & Monitoring

The aim of Filtering & Monitoring systems within Equip Education is to block harmful and inappropriate content (including preventing the generation or accessing of harmful and inappropriate content created through generative AI) whilst not unreasonably impacting teaching and learning. To this end, the DSO - with support from the Senior Leadership Team - has lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes that are in place within Equip Education.

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Responsibilities

The DSO - who has lead responsibility for safeguarding and online safety - will also be responsible for overseeing and acting upon:

- Procuring the appropriate Filtering & Monitoring systems
- Documenting decisions on what is blocked - or allowed - and why
- Checks to the Filtering & Monitoring systems
- Overseeing Filtering & Monitoring Reports
- Safeguarding concerns arising from such reports
- Reviewing the effectiveness of Equip Education's provision.

The DSO's additional responsibilities - in relation to Filtering & Monitoring - includes ensuring that all Equip Education staff:

- Understand their role - as well as the systems that are in place for online safety
- Are appropriately trained to manage those systems effectively
- Follow policies, processes and procedures
- Are knowledgeable on how to escalate any concerns when they may arise - and that they always act on reports and concerns.

Where appropriate, Equip Education will work closely with any IT service providers (whether internal or external) to ensure that Filtering & Monitoring is effective - and appropriate - for Equip Education's needs. Any such IT service provider will have technical responsibility for:

- Maintaining the Filtering & Monitoring systems
- Providing Filtering & Monitoring reports
- Completing actions following concerns or checks to systems.

Equip Education will use communications with parents and carers to reinforce the importance of children being safe online and outlining the systems being used by Equip Education to Filter & Monitor online use. Equip Education will also explain what children are being asked to do online - including the sites they will be asked to access - as well as who from Equip Education (if anyone) their child will be interacting with online.

Equip Education's Online Safety Coordinator's contact details

Online Safety Coordinator		
Name	Trevor Chulan	
Job Title	Director & Behaviour Manager	
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Equip Education's Online Safety Agreement for Use with Young People and Adults is available from Equip Education's DSO.

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Equip Education will review this **Online Safety Policy** and best practice at least annually. In addition, more frequent reviews will be undertaken following a change in safeguarding legislation; following the implementation of a new activity or service which involves contact with children and/or adults at risk; following a safeguarding incident within Equip Education (or one which directly concerns or affects Equip Education); and/or following a significant organisational change.

**Reviewed & Updated:
September 2025**

Next update September 2026