



Online Safety Policy

Parenting Special Children works directly with children with additional needs and their families. Specific activities include:

- Weekly group for autistic children and young people
- Monthly group for autistic girls and young women under the age of 18
- Monthly group for children in care and adopted children and young people.

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices
- provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide PSC's approach to online safety
- ensure that, as an organisation, PSC operates in line with its values and within the law in terms of how online devices are used.

The policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone else who may be involved in PSC's activities.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people in England from online abuse or cyber-bullying. Summaries of the key legislation and guidance are available as follows:

online abuse: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse>

bullying: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying>

child protection: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system>

PSC believes that children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind. They should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

PSC recognises that:

- The online world provides many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges.
- PSC has a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in the organisation are protected from potential harm online.
- PSC has a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using PSC's network and devices.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, sex, gender identity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

PSC will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- appointing an online safety coordinator [Jennie Kettell]
- providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through the PSD Employee Handbook (section on social media)
- supporting and encouraging the children and young people using PSC's services to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- developing an online safety agreement for use with children young people and their parents/carers (see Appendix)
- 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
- reviewing and updating the security of PSC IT systems regularly
- ensuring that usernames, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively, ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in PSC is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given
- examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation
- providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse)
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

If online abuse occurs, PSC will respond by:

- making sure PSC's response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and the organisation as a whole into account
- reviewing its procedures and considering any further actions that could be taken to ensure that any problems are resolved in the long term.

Related policies and procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following other PSC policies:

- PSC Procedure for dealing with allegations made against an employee/volunteer
- Procedure for safeguarding at PSC events attended by children and young people
- PSC Online Safety Policy Statement
- PSC Confidentiality Policy

Contact details

Online Safety Coordinator: Jennie Kettell

jennie@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

0118 986 3532

Designated Lead for Safeguarding: Ruth Pearse

ruth@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

07876 275731

Resources used to draw up this policy

As well as the relevant legislation, this policy was drawn up with reference to the NSPCC online safety policy statement.

Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed by the PSC board of trustees annually.

This policy was adopted by the trustees in June 2020

Reviewed July 2021, amended July 2021

APPENDIX

Online safety agreement for children and young people

Parenting Special Children understands the importance of children being able to use the internet for education and personal development. This includes social media platforms, games and apps.

We aim to support children and young people in making use of these in our work. However, we also recognise that safeguards need to be in place to ensure children are kept safe at all times.

This agreement is part of our overarching code of behaviour for children and young people and staff and volunteers. It also fits with our overarching Online Safety Policy. If you would like to know more about this, please speak to Ruth Pearse, CEO of PSC.

More information about online safety is available from:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/social-media-and-online-safety>

Child/Young person: please read the following agreement and discuss it with your parents/carers and group leader.

Parents/carers: please read and discuss this agreement with your child and then sign it, ask your child to sign it, and return it to the group leader. If you have any questions or concerns please speak to Ruth Pearse, CEO.

Child/Young person's agreement:

- I will be responsible for my behaviour when using the internet, including social media platforms, games and apps. This includes the resources I access and the language I use.
- I will not deliberately browse, download or upload material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material I will report it immediately to the group leader.
- I will not send anyone material that could be considered threatening, bullying, offensive or illegal.
- I will not give out any personal information online, such as my name, phone number or address.
- I will not reveal my passwords to anyone.

- I will not arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone I meet online unless I have discussed this with my parents and/or group leader and am accompanied by a trusted adult.
- If I am concerned or upset about anything I see on the internet or any messages that I receive, I know I can talk to [insert name of group leader].
- I understand that my internet use at Parenting Special Children will be monitored and logged and can be made available to the group leader.
- I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe and that if I choose not to follow them, PSC may contact my parents/carers.

Signatures: We have discussed this online safety agreement and [child's name] agrees to follow the rules set out above.

Parent/carer signature.....

Date

Child/Young person's signature.....

Date