

ONLINE SAFETY POLICY AND GUIDE

Effective 1 September 2026 | Review date: September 2027

Organisation	The Community Schools CIC
Company number	14658587
Registered office	Office 211, Epicentre, Enterprise Way, Withersfield, Haverhill, England CB9 7LR
Policy owner	Claire Meadows-Smith - Principal
Safeguarding leads	DSL: Hayley Coull Deputy DSL: Claire Meadows-Smith
Online learning lead	Wendy Meadows-Smith - Director of Online Learning
Tutors' Association	Corporate Member CO 306

This policy applies to all online tutoring delivered by The Community Schools CIC and should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, Tutor Code of Conduct, Student Behaviour Code, Anti-Bullying Policy and Privacy Policy.

1. Purpose and safeguarding principles

Online tutoring must provide the same high standards of safeguarding, professional conduct and respect expected in face-to-face provision. Tutors must remain alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, inappropriate online behaviour and other safeguarding concerns. Any concern must be reported promptly under The Community Schools CIC safeguarding procedures.

All tutors are QTS-qualified teachers and must complete the safeguarding training and reading required by The Community Schools CIC, including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 Part One.

2. Approved platform and communication

- Online tutoring will take place through the platform approved by The Community Schools CIC, currently Pencil Spaces, or another platform expressly authorised by the organisation.
- Sessions must take place only at the agreed date and time. Tutors must not arrange private or additional sessions directly with a student.
- Tutors, students and parents/carers must not exchange personal telephone numbers, personal email addresses or social-media contact details. Communication must use authorised Community Schools channels.
- Tutors must not connect with, follow or communicate privately with students through personal social-media, messaging, gaming or other online accounts.
- Links, files and online resources shared during tuition must be appropriate, educationally relevant and reasonably checked by the tutor.

3. Tutor expectations

- Conduct the whole session alone in an appropriate, quiet and non-public space, free from avoidable interruptions.
- Maintain professional dress, language, background and behaviour and ensure that no inappropriate personal information or material is visible or audible.
- Use a suitable device and secure internet connection and take reasonable steps to protect account credentials and session links.
- Do not make personal recordings, screenshots, photographs or copies of the session or student work outside authorised Community Schools systems.

The Community Schools CIC is a **not-for-profit cooperative** of qualified teachers dedicated to providing safe and affordable access to the highest quality tutoring according to needs that are not properly satisfied by the education system.

- Keep personal mobile phones silent and away during the session except for an emergency or expressly authorised educational purpose.
- Pause or end a session and contact the administration team or DSL where circumstances make it unsafe or inappropriate to continue.

4. Parent/carer expectations

- Support the student with the basic IT set-up needed to access the session.
- Provide a safe, quiet and appropriate environment for online tuition.
- For students under 18, ensure a parent/carer or other responsible adult is available and within reasonable hearing distance during the session. The adult does not need to sit in the session unless this is appropriate for the student's needs.
- Use Community Schools communication channels rather than contacting tutors privately.
- Raise any safeguarding, conduct, technical or privacy concern promptly with The Community Schools CIC.

5. Student expectations

- Join only at the agreed tutoring time and use the session link or account provided.
- Behave respectfully and follow the Student Behaviour Code, including rules on bullying, harassment and inappropriate online behaviour.
- Keep mobile phones silent and out of use unless the tutor asks for the device for a legitimate learning activity.
- Do not share session links, passwords, recordings, screenshots or personal contact information.
- Tell the tutor, parent/carer or another trusted adult if anything online makes them feel worried, unsafe or uncomfortable.

6. Recording of online sessions

Online tutoring sessions are recorded as part of The Community Schools CIC's safeguarding and educational arrangements. Parents/carers are informed of the recording arrangements before tuition begins and the arrangements are reflected in the organisation's Privacy Policy and terms.

- Recordings are accessible only to the student, their tutor and authorised Community Schools administrators, subject to safeguarding or legal requirements.
- Recordings are stored securely within authorised online/admin systems and must not be downloaded, copied or shared outside those systems unless authorised for a lawful and necessary purpose.
- Recordings are retained only while the student remains a current student. When the student ceases to be a current student, recordings will normally be deleted within 30 days.
- A particular recording may be retained for longer where necessary for a safeguarding concern, complaint, legal obligation or the establishment, exercise or defence of legal claims. Access will remain restricted.
- Requests concerning access to or deletion of recordings will be considered in accordance with the Privacy Policy, safeguarding duties and applicable data-protection law.

7. Monitoring and safeguarding response

Authorised Community Schools administrators may access recordings where reasonably necessary for safeguarding, quality assurance, investigation of a concern or complaint, or another legitimate organisational purpose consistent with the Privacy Policy.

Tutors must not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves. They must make a factual record and report concerns promptly to the DSL, Hayley Coull, or Deputy DSL, Claire Meadows-Smith, in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures. If a child is in immediate danger, emergency services should be contacted without delay.

8. Cybersecurity and inappropriate content

- Passwords and account credentials must not be shared and should be protected using the security controls available on approved systems.
- Unexpected or suspicious links, files, messages or access attempts must not be opened or forwarded and should be reported to The Community Schools administration team.
- Any accidental exposure to harmful, sexual, violent, extremist or otherwise inappropriate content must be dealt with calmly, the content closed where safe to do so, and the incident reported where safeguarding action may be required.
- Cyberbullying, sexual harassment, discriminatory abuse, sharing of intimate images, impersonation and other harmful online behaviour are not tolerated and will be addressed under the relevant safeguarding, anti-bullying and behaviour procedures.

9. Data protection and privacy

Personal data used in online tutoring will be handled in accordance with The Community Schools CIC Privacy Policy and applicable UK data-protection law. Only authorised systems should be used to store student information, session records and recordings. Tutors must not transfer student information to personal accounts, devices or cloud-storage services except where expressly authorised.

10. Contacts and review

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Hayley Coull | Deputy DSL: Claire Meadows-Smith. Safeguarding concerns should be reported using the current Community Schools safeguarding contact arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if there is a significant change to legislation, safeguarding guidance, technology, the approved online platform or The Community Schools CIC's operating arrangements.