
e-Safety

Policies and Procedures

bbodance 2024-25

Introduction

The internet can present many risks for children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable to harm by virtue of their care and support needs. Technology has many benefits but here at bbodance we recognise the use of technology can also become a platform for online bullying, sexual exploitation, sexual predation, radicalisation and other types of harm and abuse.

We recognise our duty to safeguard against this by identifying these issues and sharing information with the relevant services to protect children, young people and at-risk adults. This policy explains how we use social media and online teaching within bbodance to mitigate risk and safeguard students. It details our duty to safeguard in the online environment and our expectations regarding the behaviour of teachers, staff, contractors, volunteers and the children, young people and adults who use our organisation.

At bbodance we will do everything we can to limit exposure to online risk. We will do this by ensuring clear guidelines and procedures and will do so in line with our respective Safeguarding Children and Adults Policies.

It is important that everyone working with or for bbodance is aware that their safeguarding duty extends to the safeguarding of students online, regardless of the type of online device or the type of platform used. This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of bbodance, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. Everyone must adhere to this policy and must understand their duties and responsibilities regarding safeguarding. A copy of this policy will be always available on the bbodance website.

All bbodance safeguarding policies are applicable in the online environment. Safeguarding online is a 2-part duty;

- We will protect from online harm in the broader community by identifying risk and instances of abuse and working to safeguarding children from these
- We will also aim to prevent any harm by ensuring our processes around online safety are robust and minimise online risk to children, young people and at-risk adult who use our services.

Staff and volunteers shall be made aware of this policy through training and during staff meetings. It is the responsibility of all staff at bbodance to take steps to protect children, to keep them safe from online hazards and to take appropriate action where needed. It is the responsibility of all to protect children, young people and at-risk adults from harm and abuse while in contact with our organisation including through online activity and **our duty to report any incident of or suspicion of abuse to the designated safeguarding person or in their absence to the appropriate statutory authority.**

It is essential that this policy is read in conjunction with the bbodance safeguarding children and safeguarding adults policy and that all recording and information sharing procedures laid out within these are followed regarding any cause for concern that arises from online interaction.

This includes any online disclosure of harm or any disclosed or witnessed examples of online or cyber bullying.

Legal framework

We recognise our duty to safeguarding as outlined in the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and follow the [Prevent duty's statutory guidance](#) regarding online safety and radicalisation (UK Home Office, 2019). We recognise our duty to safeguarding at risk adults as outlined in the Care Act 2014.

Suspected online terrorist material can be reported through the [GOV.UK website, Report Online Terrorist Material](#). Content of concern can also be reported directly to social media platforms – see [UK Safer Internet website](#).

The [Serious Crime Act \(2015\)](#) introduced an offence of sexual communication with a child. This applies to an adult who communicates with a child and the communication is sexual or if it is intended to elicit from the child a communication which is sexual and the adult reasonably believes the child to be under 16 years of age.

Protection of Children Act 1978

It is an offence to take, permit to be taken, make, possess, show, distribute or advertise indecent images of children in the United Kingdom. A child for these purposes is anyone under the age of 18. Viewing an indecent image of a child on your computer means that you have made a digital image. An image of a child also covers pseudo-photographs (digitally collated or otherwise). A person convicted of such an offence may face up to 10 years in prison.

Sexual Offences Act 2003

The offence of grooming is committed if you are over 18 and have communicated with a child under 16 on one or more occasions (including by phone or using the internet) and subsequently travel to meet them anywhere in the world with the intention of committing a sexual offence. Causing a child under 16 to watch a sexual act is illegal, including looking at images such as videos, photos or webcams, for your own gratification. It is also an offence for a person in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with any person under 18, with whom they are in a position of trust. Any sexual intercourse with a child under the age of 13 commits the offence of rape.

Serious Crime Act 2015

The Act introduces an offence of sexual communication with a child. This relates to an adult who communicates with a child for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification, where the communication is sexual or if it is intended to elicit from the child a communication which is sexual and the adult reasonably believes the child to be under 16.

Risk of harm:

Internet Abuse covers five main areas of abuse:

- Sharing and production of abusive images (although these are not confined to the internet)
- Being groomed online for the purpose of sexual abuse
- Exposure to pornographic images or other offensive material via the internet
- The use of the internet, and in particular social media sites, to engage individuals in extremist ideologies or to promote gang related violence; and
- Online bullying (please see the bbodance anti-bullying policy)

Social networking sites are often used by perpetrators as an easy way to access children, young people or at-risk adults for sexual or criminal exploitation and abuse. In addition, radical and extremist groups may use social networking to attract children, young people or at-risk adults into rigid and narrow ideologies that are intolerant of diversity: this is similar to the grooming process and exploits the same vulnerabilities.

Grooming

Section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act) makes it an offence for a person aged 18 or over to meet intentionally, or to travel with the intention of meeting, a child aged under 16 in any part of the world, if he has met or communicated with the child on at least one earlier occasion, and intends to commit a “relevant offence” against that child either at the time of the meeting or on a subsequent occasion. This section is intended to cover situations where an adult establishes contact with a child through, for example meetings, telephone conversations or communications on the internet”.

Additional information on signs symptoms and indicators of abuse can be found in the bbodance safeguarding children and safeguarding adult’s policies and training on safeguarding must be refreshed every 3 years.

Safeguarding action

The designated safeguarding lead at bbodance is Fiona Knowler. The designated safeguarding lead will advise all those working with or for bbodance and parents/ carers where appropriate on best practice and expectations regarding the use of online classes and social media platforms. **They will be responsible for the monitoring and recording of any safeguarding concerns and for ensuring that all concerns are shared with the appropriate statutory authorities, online concerns are not an exception to this.**

At bbodance we will safeguard students (both adults and children) using online services by:

- 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
- ensuring all social media accounts are password protected, that all taught sessions are password protected and that all users of bbodance services are informed in writing of the importance of not sharing passwords to protect the privacy of others.
- ensuring more than one member of staff will have access to every social media account and will be able to see what happens within all groups. If any member of staff or volunteer has concerns about the behaviour or conduct of another individual within the organisation the nature of the concern should be reported to the designated safeguarding person who will report the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- the designated safeguarding lead shall have access to view sites and groups as necessary and there will be a designated member of staff who is responsible for checking and monitoring the quality and appropriateness of all posts on social media sites / groups. The member of staff with monitoring responsibility also has the right to remove inappropriate posts with immediate effect but will be asked to provide a reason for this decision where appropriate
- all social media posts will align with the work of bbodance, be fit for purpose and align with our organisational aims
- all pages, channels and groups should have appropriate privacy settings
- all account names and email addresses shall be appropriate and fitting for a professional organisation.

What teaching staff and parents/carers need to know:

- parents / carers shall be asked to be present during any online taught sessions for children as their child's health, safety and wellbeing remains their responsibility whilst the child is in their home
- health and safety will be a key consideration in planning taught sessions in the home via video call
- no identifiers shall be posted on any online forum or page for example date of birth, address or phone number and full names should only be used with consent from a parent / guardian and only if necessary
- all photos and videos used must be with full consent from a parent or guardian or the adult themselves as appropriate
- children will not be admitted into groups without the consent of their parent / guardian
- groups will not be created on platforms that are not age appropriate for the intended members.
- all communication directly with children will be approved by parents/ carers in advance and children shall not be contacted on platforms or sites that are not age appropriate
- we will make children, young people and adults aware of who they can speak to should they come across social media or online content they find distressing or should they be exposed to bullying / cyber bullying while accessing online services.

At bbodance we expect all staff and volunteers to safeguard children and adults and to cause them no harm as outlined in our safeguarding policies. This also extends to the online environment:

Staff and volunteers:

- have a duty to bring to the designated safeguarding leads attention anything they find to be inappropriate or potentially unsafe including online content or any concerns they have about what they have seen during live sessions either regarding a child /adult, the behaviour of others around them or their home circumstances
- will ensure on any videos they create or live sessions they generate that their background environment is clear, professional and appropriate.
- will always try to consider children's understanding of the internet and their safety when making decisions about the online platforms they choose to use.
- will abide by bbodance's safeguarding policies and data protection policy.
- must not 'friend' or 'follow' children, young people or their families on their personal social media accounts. All and the only social media contact must be through bbodance business pages.
- must always choose the most formal and professional channel of communication for example email rather than WhatsApp chat and will ensure messages have an appropriate professional tone. Additionally, teachers will not start 'conversations' with students on social media or email all communication will have a clear and legitimate purpose.
- all online communication with families should be part of an agreed social media or educational strategy

The bbodance Community:

All parents, carers, children, young people and adults using bbodance services or facilities must also be aware of their duty towards others and that that duty towards safety and wellbeing also applies to all online interaction. All involved with bbodance have a duty to uphold appropriate behaviour and have a right to be able to share any concerns and to be supported. **If any user of bbodance services has a concern, they should be listened to and this information should be recorded and passed to the designated safeguarding person as soon as possible.** We recognise that many parents / carers do not feel confident in using the internet and are unsure how or where to report concerns. The designated safeguarding person will maintain communication with parents who share concerns and ensure they are supported to act on their concerns in the most appropriate way.

The bbodance anti-bullying policy makes reference to acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour and this policy should be read.

Any concerns of significant harm will be raised with Children's/ Adults Social Care, or the Police as explained in our safeguarding policy and in line with the Children Act 1989 & 2004/ the Care Act 2014 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

All concerns about online abuse must be:

- Recorded on a safeguarding report form (please see safeguarding policies)
- Shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Fiona Knower
- Shared outward to children's/ adults' social care as appropriate and in accordance with our policies
- Reported to the police in the case of criminal matters

All responses must consider the needs of the person who has experienced the online harm and any bystanders effected.

Dependent on the inappropriate activity or materials it may be necessary to consider the following actions:

If the harm is caused by another child:

- Inform the designated safeguarding lead
- Follow Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures
- Sanctions may be considered (please see anti bullying policy)
- Provision of information or education should be made where appropriate
- Anti bullying procedures (please see anti bullying policy) should be implemented
- Work with parents / carers should be carried out, as appropriate
- Support should be offered to all parties affected, as appropriate

If the harm is caused by a Staff member or volunteer:

- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding if the allegation involves the DSL
- Follow allegations procedure (please see managing allegations policy)
- Disciplinary Action should be taken, as appropriate
- Staff training should be carried out, where necessary and appropriate
- Support should be offered as appropriate e.g., counselling.

This policy will be reviewed annually in August.