

Online Safety Policy and Procedure

This policy links to the Academic Families Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and outlines how we do everything we can to help keep our students safe online.

This policy is aligned to –

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020](#)
- [Online Safety advice - NSPCC](#)
- [What is online abuse?](#)

The NSPCC defines online abuse as any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Students may experience cyberbullying (social media, gaming and texting), grooming (building an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking), sexual abuse, 'sexting' or youth produced imagery, sexual exploitation, county lines gang recruitment, radicalisation or emotional abuse from people they know as well as from strangers.

Academic Families staff are involved in the annual review of the policy, and guidance for parents, students and host families has been tailored from the policy and included within their respective handbooks –

- Parent Handbook - page 14
- Student Handbook - page 37
- Host Handbook - page 57

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored and reviewed annually through the number of reported incidents of a breach of online safety.

Academic Families Staff

Academic Families staff are aware of online safety and how to minimise the risks attached to digital and video images of students. They are always alert to any indication that one of our students may not be using the internet responsibly including frequent mobile data top ups.

Hosts

Hosts play a crucial role in ensuring that the students who stay with them use the internet and mobile devices in accordance with the guidance contained within the Host Handbook.

They will explain their house rules for internet use when the student arrives and monitor their use, turning the router off at night if the student does not observe agreed usage. If the student persists to use the internet anti socially or at risk to themselves then the host will notify the Guardianship or Area Manager who will contact the student and parent to enforce our policies.

Students

Students are responsible for using the internet and mobile devices in accordance with the guidance in the Student Handbook. Students must know the importance of adopting good online safety practice and reporting misuse, abuse or access to inappropriate materials and know how to report these concerns. Academic Families further supports students in raising their awareness of how to stay safe online through our social media updates, policies and website.

Online Abuse Incident Procedure

The Academic Families staff member receiving the report of suspected online abuse will advise the student

- immediately to report the incident with the online service eg FaceBook or Instagram
- find a responsible adult at the host or school to support them
- NOT to delete the abusive content from their device as it may be required as evidence.

When they know the student is safe, they will report the incident to the Child Protection Officer (CPO).

The CPO will follow our Child Protection Policy and is responsible to

- collect the known details of the incident including any evidence
- evaluate the alleged threat and risk to the child
- evaluate any vulnerabilities of the child
- implement the action plan
- contact school, and the police depending on the severity of the incident - if there is a concern that a student has been harmed or is at immediate risk of harm call police 999 otherwise contact them on 101
- assess cultural concerns and how best to inform the student's parents
- continue to review the situation until it has been resolved
- record the incident on the student's record on ILP – Journals*
- complete an Incident Report form*
- report the incident to school when appropriate

* may be delegated to the Guardian or Area Manager.

The CPO will ask to view the content of concern to assess the severity and validity of the allegation with particular respect to the student's age and culture.

The CPO will arrange student support according to the severity of the incident. Help is available from

- school
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)
- ChildLine
- National Crime Agency (NCA)
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

The CPO will also assess if the Academic Families staff or host who have viewed the imagery may need support.

The police should be called immediately if -

- an adult is involved in the allegations
- there is reason to believe that the student has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed
- the imagery or content depicts sexual acts and the student is under 13, the acts are violent or unusual for the student's developmental stage
- the student is at risk of harm – suicidal or self harm