

Online Safety - Safeguarding Policy Addendum

This addendum to the Downright Excellent child protection statement and safeguarding policy deals specifically with Online Safety in response to the organisation's switch to online sessions and communication in the context of COVID-19.

The purpose of this policy

Downright Excellent core work is with children and families. This includes providing speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and life skills sessions at The Sundial Centre, E2 7RU, for children and young people with Down syndrome aged 0-17. Since COVID-19 our sessions have moved online, utilising Zoom conferencing and other technologies to continue our work.

This policy will:

- provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety.
- ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices and safeguard all users.

The policy applies to all freelancers, volunteers, children, young people, DEx families and anyone else involved in Downright Excellent's activities.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England.

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- children 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.

We recognise that:

- the online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges.
- we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online.
- we have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using Downright Excellent's network and devices.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, gender 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.

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

- providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our behaviour code for adults.
- supporting and encouraging the young people using our service 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 and to safeguard the adults who work online with their children.

- developing an online safety agreement for use with young people and their parents/carers.
- 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 our information 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 our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate.
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are taken and/or used only after written permission has been obtained, in accordance with our GDPR consent form, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given.
- providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety.
- examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:

- following the clear and robust safeguarding procedures that are in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse) including recording accurately as specified and referring on to other agencies as appropriate.
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on responding to all forms of abuse in accordance with DEx safeguarding procedures - including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
- making sure our response sensitively takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account.
- reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

16.7. 2020 - developed in response to questions at the Board

Review of the guidelines is taking place in team meetings which are held at least fortnightly. Discussion of DEx online safety take place at the bi-monthly Board meetings. This policy will be updated at least annually or more frequently if necessary.