



The **Wild** Ways

## Online Safety Policy

Effective Date	01/03/2025
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Policy Description	Guidance and best practices for safe online engagement
Author	Creative Flow & Connection Lead / TWF Lead / Data Integrity Consultant
Approved	CEO
Organisation	The Wild Ways / The Wildheart Foundation / Raising A Wild Child / The Wild Child PDA Foundation

### Overview

The Wild Ways, along with our sister organisations; Raising a Wild Child, The Wildheart Foundation, and The Wild Child PDA Foundation are committed to safeguarding all children by fostering environments that are safe, inclusive, and empowering

The aim of this policy is to safeguard Children and Young People (CYP) and all other persons involved in Young Person Guide (YPG)/Associate provision delivered by The Wild Ways. This policy works in conjunction with our [Safeguarding Policy](#) and our [Confidentiality Guidance for Keeping Families Safe](#).

There is an expectation that required professional standards will be applied to online safety as in other aspects of The Wild Way's policies and protocols that are in place for the use of online communication technology between the staff and other members of The Wild Ways and its wider community.

Any YPG/Associate working with a CYP must ensure they are fully aware of the procedures in place to protect themselves and the CYP they are working with. YPGs/Associates should always operate in an open and transparent manner and act in the CYP's best interests.





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Each YPG/Associate has a duty of care to take reasonable steps to ensure their own safety and the safety of the CYP they work with. If a risk assessment is attached to a CYP, make sure you are aware of it and have a copy of the risk assessment.

### The role of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play a crucial role in ensuring that their children understand the need to use the online services and devices in an appropriate way.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to support by;

- Reinforcing the online safety messages provided to CYPs.
- The safe use of their children's personal devices.
- The safe use of their children's online accounts.

### YPGs/Associates are responsible for ensuring that:

- They are aware of The Wild Ways Online Safety Policy and practices and have an awareness of current online safety matters/trends.
- They immediately report any suspected misuse or problem to a member of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- They understand that online safety is a core part of safeguarding.
- Any digital communication between staff and learners or parents/carers (e-mail, social media, video conferencing, phone call etc.) must be professional in tone and content.
- Any communication outside of session **must be approved** with parents beforehand. YPG/Associate must be able to provide proof of permission should it be requested.
- Any communication outside of sessions (even with parental approval) should ideally be kept to professional platforms, rather than personal communication channels, to safeguard both YPG/Associates and the CYP.



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- Where CYPs use live-streaming or video calls, YPG/Associate must have full regard to national safeguarding guidance and The Wild Ways safeguarding policies.
- YPG/Associate must model safe, responsible, and professional online behaviours in their own use of technology, including in their use of social media.
- All games used in sessions must be age-appropriate for the CYP. YPGs/Associates must ensure that any game played aligns with recognised age-rating systems (e.g., PEGI) and is suitable for the CYP's developmental stage and wellbeing. Games rated above the CYP's age **must not** be used in sessions.

### Online Gaming Guidelines

- Consent **must** be given by the CYPs parent/carer for the YPG to connect with the CYP through online gaming in sessions by completing this [Online Gaming Parent/Carer Consent Form](#).
- A profile/user account for the YPG should be created **specifically** for use in sessions, to separate any personal links/friends etc. This will also ensure the YPG can't be joined online by a CYP outside of sessions.
- YPG/Associate should make parent/carer aware of username/profile that will be used to connect with the CYP.
- YPG/Associate should not connect or join with CYPs online, outside of sessions.

### Mobile Phone Guidelines

This policy is relevant for all Children and Young People (CYP) up to the age of 18.

The following guidelines on the use of mobile phones\* must be followed.

- In line with our Lone Worker Policy, when working with a CYP, your mobile phone should be charged and available. However, your mobile phone must be kept out of sight (e.g., in a



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handbag or pocket) when you are with a CYP.

- Mobile phones should never be used to take photographs or videos of CYP or to store their personal data. However, they can be used to photograph work created by the CYP, provided consent has been obtained, so that this can be shared on a learning platform.
- Do not give your mobile phone to the young person to use for any reason.
- Never contact CYP from your personal mobile phone or give your mobile number to CYP.
- Your phone must be switched off or set to 'silent' during sessions with CYP, and you must not make or receive calls. In extreme circumstances (e.g. an acutely ill relative), please ensure you inform the YPG/Associate Lead in advance.
- Mobile phones should not be used at any time within a CYP's home or any external environment where sessions take place. This applies even if the CYP is temporarily in another room or not actively engaging. Phones should remain out of sight and unused for the duration of the visit, except in an emergency situation.
- If this requirement presents any difficulty, we may be able to arrange for a basic pay-as-you-go mobile phone to be made available for emergency use during sessions. This phone will have its own dedicated number, which you may share with any individuals who may need to contact you urgently.
- Calls and texts must be made or received in private during non-contact times.

**Mobile Phone Exception** - If exchanging a mobile phone number with a CYP is a means to mitigate risk while in the community, this must be agreed in advance with written consent from the parent/carer.

*\*The term 'phone' in this policy refers to mobile phones, iPods, iPads, MP3 players, MP4 players, and any similar portable electronic devices.*

### Guidance for Use of Personal Devices in Sessions





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We recognise that staff sometimes find it useful to bring their own devices into sessions to support learning and engagement. This guidance sets out how personal laptops or tablets may be used safely and appropriately, in line with our safeguarding and data protection responsibilities.

It is permitted to use a personal laptop/tablet to show:

- Pre-prepared PowerPoints, documents, or learning resources
- Offline videos or media prepared in advance
- Safe, planned online content directly relevant to the session

Safeguards you must follow

1. **Data protection:** Do not save student information or work to your personal device. Upload work to your TWF google drive systems (e.g. SharePoint, Teams) and remove it locally.
2. **Visibility:** Ensure personal files, emails, or apps are not visible to students during sessions.
3. **Password protection:** Devices must be secured with a strong password and never left unlocked or unattended with students.
4. **Boundaries:** Do not use personal accounts or messaging apps to communicate with students. All communication must remain within The Wild Ways systems.
5. **Check if unsure:** if you're not sure whether a website, video, or platform is suitable, please check with your supervisor or safeguarding lead before use.

### Report a Safeguarding Concern

If you have a safeguarding concern, please complete this form [Report a Safeguarding Concern](#) and contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): **Lara Turner**

Email: **[safe@wildheartfoundation.co.uk](mailto:safe@wildheartfoundation.co.uk)**

Mobile: **07760227680**

