

SENbetweeners Hub UK – Online Safety & Digital Safeguarding Policy

Policy Administration

Version	Effective Date	Review Date	Approved By
1.0	June 2026	June 2027	Trustees / Management Team

Statutory Compliance

This policy is maintained in accordance with the following regulatory frameworks:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2025
- Children Act 2023
- UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018
- Online Safety Act 2023
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- Ofsted and Charity Commission guidance

1. Policy Statement

SENbetweeners Hub UK delivers resources, training, membership support, and community engagement primarily through digital platforms, websites, social media, and online communication channels. We recognise that children and young people with undiagnosed, hidden, or emerging SEN/SEMH needs may be more vulnerable to online risks, including misinformation, exploitation, cyberbullying, and difficulties understanding digital boundaries.

Our commitment:

- Keep all users safe when accessing our services online.
- Prevent exposure to harmful, misleading, or inappropriate content.
- Manage digital communications securely and transparently.
- Comply fully with UK law and statutory safeguarding standards.
- Provide clear guidance to users, parents, and carers on safe digital practice.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Our website, membership portal, and resource library.
- Official social media accounts (Facebook, X/Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.).
- Online forums, discussion groups, and messaging systems.
- Email, video calls, webinars, and virtual workshops.
- Any third-party platforms used under our name.
- All staff, volunteers, trustees, members, parents, carers, and young people using our services.

3. Legal & Regulatory Framework

- **Online Safety Act 2023:** Duties to protect users from harmful content.
- **Children Act 1989, 2004 & 2023:** Duty of care and safeguarding.
- **KCSIE 2025:** Online safety requirements for education/community providers.
- **UK GDPR / DPA 2018:** Secure handling of personal data.
- **Equality Act 2010:** Reasonable adjustments for SEN/SEMH users.
- **Computer Misuse Act 1990:** Prevention of unauthorised access/harm.
- **Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP)** procedures.

4. Key Principles

- **Safety first:** Online activity must never compromise the welfare of children or vulnerable adults.
- **Transparency:** All official channels are clearly identified; no hidden or private accounts.
- **Boundaries:** No unmonitored one-to-one contact between staff/volunteers and young people.
- **Accessibility:** Digital content is adapted for SEN/SEMH users (clear language, simple navigation, text-to-speech support where possible).
- **No diagnosis:** All online guidance states clearly we provide information only, not clinical or legal advice.

5. Platform Management & Moderation

5.1 Official Channels

- Only named, approved accounts are used; details published on our website.
- All profiles display our logo, legal name, and contact details.
- We do not operate anonymous or "private" accounts for support purposes.

5.2 Moderation Rules

- All public posts, comments, and forum contributions are moderated within 24 working hours.
- **Prohibited content:** Abuse, hate speech, bullying, personal details, harmful links, medical/legal advice, or misleading claims.
- Content removed immediately if it breaches rules; user warned or blocked if repeated.
- Moderators follow training and work within safeguarding procedures.

5.3 Closed Groups & Membership Areas

- Access limited to registered users only.
- Terms of use accepted before joining.
- Clear rules on behaviour and sharing.
- All activity logged and reviewable for safeguarding purposes.

6. Communication Protocols

- **Group communication only:** Support and discussions take place in open/moderated groups, not private messages.
- **One-to-one contact:** Only permitted if necessary and supervised/recorded, with parental consent for users under 18.
- **Professional boundaries:** Staff/volunteers must not use personal social media to contact users.
- **Response times:** Clear times stated (e.g. Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm). No out-of-hours emergency contact unless agreed in writing.

7. Protecting Personal Data

- We collect only necessary information; never sensitive details beyond what is required.
- Data stored securely, encrypted, and not shared with third parties without consent or legal duty.
- No sharing of personal information about users, families, or staff in public spaces.
- Users advised not to share their own private details in public posts.
- Compliant with UK GDPR and our separate Data Protection Policy.

8. Identifying & Responding to Online Risks

Common risks for SEN/SEMH users:

- Misunderstanding content or boundaries.

- Over-sharing personal information.
- Targeting or bullying due to communication differences.
- Believing unqualified "advice" as fact.

Response Procedure

1. **Detection:** If you see or receive a concern, do not engage or reply publicly.
2. **Reporting:** Report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
3. **Evidence:** Record details including time, platform, content, user details, and screenshots.
4. **Action:**
 - Remove content / block user if harmful.
 - If risk to a child: Follow our Child Protection Policy and refer to Children's Social Care/MASH.
 - If technical risk: Inform IT / administrator.
5. **Audit:** Log and review in the Safeguarding Register.

9. Guidance for Users & Families

We provide clear information on:

- Setting strong privacy controls.
- Recognising safe vs unsafe content.
- Reporting concerns directly to us.
- Avoiding sharing personal addresses, phone numbers, or school details.
- Understanding that our resources are general guidance only, not a substitute for professional support.

10. Roles & Responsibilities

- **DSL:** Leads on online safety concerns, referrals, and training.
- **Management:** Approves platforms, sets budgets, and reviews policy.
- **Moderators:** Trained to spot risks and follow reporting rules.

- **Staff/Volunteers:** Use only approved channels, follow boundaries, report concerns.
- **Users:** Agree to abide by terms and use services responsibly.

11. Training & Review

- All staff/volunteers complete Online Safety + Safeguarding Level 2 training.
- DSL holds specialist training on digital safeguarding.
- Policy reviewed annually, or earlier if new legislation, platforms, or incidents occur.

12. Key Contacts

Contact Role	Name	Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Ⓐ Person	Email: Ⓐ Person
Direct Phone	N/A	Phone: Ⓐ Person
Local MASH Referral	Lincolnshire County Council	Phone: Ⓐ Person

External Reporting Resources

- **Report Harmful Content:** reportharmfulcontent.com
- **NSPCC Online Safety:** nspcc.org.uk/online-safety