

Online Safety & Digital Safeguarding Policy

Policy Owner	Director of Operations
Approved By	Board of Directors
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Applies To	All staff, contractors and agency workers, children and young people engaged with LTS Group services, and their parents or carers

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1. Purpose

This policy provides guidance on how LTS Group uses the internet, digital technology, and social media, and outlines the standards of behaviour expected from staff, contractors, children, and parents when engaging online.

LTS Group works with children and young people who may be particularly vulnerable, often in home-based and one-to-one settings. While it is not the role of LTS Group to police or monitor a child's online activity within the home, we recognise our responsibility to educate, guide, and support parents and children in understanding online risks and safeguarding concerns.

LTS Group is committed to implementing this policy and responding promptly and appropriately to any online safety concerns in line with safeguarding procedures.

2. Aims

The aims of this Online Safety Policy are to:

- Protect children and young people engaged with LTS Group while using technology in connection with our services.
- Provide staff and contractors with clear guidance on online safety expectations and how to respond to concerns or incidents.
- Promote safe, responsible, and professional use of digital communication.
- Ensure LTS Group operates in line with current UK legislation and statutory safeguarding guidance.

3. Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy is informed by, and should be read in conjunction with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Prevent Duty Guidance
- UK Safer Internet Centre guidance

4. Understanding the Online World

LTS Group recognises that digital technology is an integral part of children's lives. As part of our approach, we will:

- Assess and manage online safety risks associated with websites, apps, social media platforms (including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and X) and video conferencing platforms (such as Zoom or Teams).
- Maintain awareness of how staff and children use technology in relation to LTS Group activities.
- Ensure staff understand acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour.
- Provide training for staff responsible for managing LTS Group's online presence.
- Regularly review safeguarding policies to ensure online safeguarding is fully embedded, including:

- Online disclosures and abuse reporting procedures
- Cyberbullying within anti-bullying policies

5. Managing LTS Group's Online Presence

LTS Group's website and social media presence will adhere to the following safeguards:

- Organisational social media accounts will be password-protected, with access restricted to authorised members of staff.
- Accounts will be appropriately monitored by designated staff.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be consulted where safeguarding considerations arise.
- Inappropriate content will be removed promptly and any safeguarding concerns reported in accordance with LTS Group safeguarding procedures.
- Appropriate privacy and security settings will be applied.
- Personal or identifying information relating to children and young people will not be published without appropriate authorisation and a lawful basis.
- Confidential information will only be shared using approved secure systems.
- Content published by LTS Group will reflect appropriate professional standards.
- Appropriate consent will be obtained before photographs or videos of children or young people are published or shared by LTS Group.

6. Expectations of Staff and Contractors

Staff and contractors must:

- Familiarise themselves with and adhere to this policy.
- Seek advice from the DSL if any online safety or safeguarding concerns arise.
- Only communicate with children and young people using approved methods and in accordance with LTS Group safeguarding procedures.
- Never communicate with children or young people through personal social media accounts.
- Not 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise connect with children or young people they support through LTS Group using personal accounts.
- Maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would during face-to-face contact.
- Ensure publicly available personal online content does not compromise professional boundaries or the reputation of LTS Group.
- Use approved communication channels when communicating with parents and carers.
- Avoid unnecessary communication outside appropriate working hours.
- Use professional and appropriate language in all digital communications.
- Not delete or conceal organisational communications relating to children or safeguarding matters.
- Treat online disclosures or concerns in accordance with LTS Group safeguarding and reporting procedures.
- Follow LTS Group safeguarding requirements when delivering online or remote sessions.
- Never request, encourage, share or engage with sexual or otherwise inappropriate images or content involving children or young people, and report any such concern immediately in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

7. Online Safety – Children and Young People

LTS Group works with children and young people, many of whom are vulnerable and supported on a one-to-one basis, often within the home. This section sets out how online safety is addressed in relation to children and young people accessing LTS Group services.

LTS Group does not monitor or police a child's online activity in the home. Responsibility for supervising and monitoring online use outside LTS Group sessions remains with parents and carers. However, LTS Group is committed to:

- raising awareness of online risks with children and young people in an age-appropriate and supportive way
- encouraging children and young people to speak to a trusted adult if something online makes them feel worried, upset or unsafe
- responding appropriately to any online safety concern or disclosure in accordance with LTS Group safeguarding procedures

During LTS Group sessions, children and young people are expected to:

- use technology respectfully and responsibly
- follow guidance given by staff or tutors regarding appropriate online behaviour
- not engage in bullying, harmful behaviour or the sharing of inappropriate content
- tell a parent, carer or LTS Group staff member if they encounter something online that causes concern

Any online safety concern disclosed to or identified by LTS Group will be treated as a safeguarding concern and managed in accordance with the LTS Group Safeguarding Policy.

8. Expectations of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- be aware of and support LTS Group's approach to online safety
- appropriately supervise their child's online activity at home, taking account of their age, needs and circumstances
- support the protection of their child's privacy and personal information online
- access appropriate online safety information and guidance
- work in partnership with LTS Group where an online safety or safeguarding concern arises in connection with LTS Group services

9. Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Communication

When using mobile phones or digital communication in connection with LTS Group services:

- Staff and contractors must use approved communication methods and maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Communication with children and young people must be in accordance with LTS Group safeguarding procedures and should ordinarily be conducted through parents or carers where appropriate.
- Personal social media accounts must never be used to communicate with children or young people.
- Professional or organisational accounts and communication channels must be used for work-related communication.

- Communications must be professional, appropriate and limited to matters relevant to the service being provided.
- Where a digital communication raises a safeguarding concern, staff must preserve the communication and report it immediately in accordance with LTS Group safeguarding procedures.

10. Supporting Parents with Online Safety

LTS Group encourages parents and carers to access appropriate online safety information and guidance. Where an online safety concern arises in connection with LTS Group services, parents and carers can contact LTS Group for advice and will be signposted to appropriate support or resources where required.

11. Review and Communication

This policy will:

- be communicated to relevant staff and contractors as part of onboarding, induction and ongoing safeguarding arrangements
- be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant legislative, regulatory, safeguarding or operational changes
- be made available to relevant staff, contractors, parents, carers and other stakeholders where appropriate

Contact	Contact Details	Comments
Landline	020 8629 3655	Office hours
Eddi Banks	07540 881687	Director
Karen Coles	020 8629 3655	Compliance Manager
Liz Feeney	07719 304301	Safeguarding Officer
Email contacts	e.banks@ltsg.co.uk; k.coles@ltsg.co.uk; l.feeney@ltsg.co.uk	