8billionideas

Online Academy Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

1. Policy Statement

8billionideas is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We recognise our responsibility to provide a safe, secure, and inclusive environment across all areas of delivery, including online and virtual learning.

This policy outlines the safeguarding measures specific to the **8billionideas Online Academy** and should be read in conjunction with our overarching Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and the safeguarding requirements of our partner schools.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All 8billionideas staff, facilitators, and contractors
- All students participating in Online Academy programmes
- All online sessions, platforms, and digital interactions

3. Safeguarding in an Online Environment

We recognise that online delivery presents unique safeguarding considerations. To mitigate risk and ensure student safety:

- All sessions are delivered through approved, secure digital platforms
- Sessions may be monitored and/or recorded for safeguarding and quality assurance purposes
- Facilitators maintain appropriate supervision and oversight at all times
- Any behaviour that may compromise safety, wellbeing, or dignity is addressed promptly

4. Platform Security & Access Control

To ensure a controlled and secure virtual environment:

- Access is restricted to registered participants only

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- Secure meeting links are issued directly and must not be shared
- Waiting rooms and host controls are used to manage entry
- Participants may be removed if behaviour breaches expectations or safeguarding standards
- Age-appropriate platform settings are applied where required

5. Professional Conduct & Communication Protocols

All staff and facilitators are expected to maintain professional boundaries at all times:

- No unsupervised 1:1 communication with students is permitted
- All communication must take place via approved platforms and official channels
- Facilitators must not connect with students via personal social media, messaging apps, or personal contact details
- Any required 1:1 support must be:
    - Pre-approved
    - Time-bound
    - Conducted transparently (and visible to a parent/carer or school where appropriate)

6. Safer Recruitment & Staff Compliance

8billionideas adopts robust safer recruitment practices:

- All facilitators undergo appropriate background checks (e.g. Enhanced DBS or local equivalent)
- Safeguarding and child protection training is mandatory prior to delivery
- Staff are required to adhere to the organisation's Code of Conduct and safeguarding procedures

7. Reporting & Escalation Procedures

All staff have a professional duty to act on safeguarding concerns.

- Any concern regarding a child's safety or wellbeing must be reported immediately
- Concerns are escalated internally in line with safeguarding procedures
- Where appropriate, concerns may be shared with:
    - The partner school or organisation
    - Relevant local authorities

All safeguarding concerns are:

- Recorded accurately
- Managed confidentially

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- Handled in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements

8. Behaviour & Online Conduct

Participants are expected to engage respectfully and appropriately:

- Bullying, harassment, discriminatory behaviour, or inappropriate conduct is not tolerated
- Disruptive behaviour will be addressed in line with programme expectations
- Serious or repeated breaches may result in removal from sessions or withdrawal from the programme

9. Supporting Individual Needs

We recognise safeguarding includes supporting students with additional needs:

- Parents/carers are encouraged to share relevant information (e.g. SEND, medical, behavioural, or wellbeing needs)
- Facilitators will make reasonable adjustments to support participation
- Information is handled sensitively and shared only where necessary

10. Parental Consent & Data Protection

In line with safeguarding and data protection regulations:

- Parental/carer consent is obtained prior to participation
- Personal data is collected and processed in accordance with applicable data protection laws
- Session recordings (where used) are securely stored and only accessed where necessary
- Information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis

11. Use of Technology, AI & Academic Integrity

To promote safe and responsible learning:

- Students are expected to use digital tools, including AI, appropriately and ethically
- Work submitted should reflect the student's own understanding
- Facilitators will provide guidance on appropriate use of technology
- Misuse (including plagiarism or inappropriate content) will be addressed in line with safeguarding and behaviour policies

12. Partnership with Schools

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8billionideas works collaboratively with partner schools and organisations to ensure:

- Alignment with each school's safeguarding policies and expectations
- Compliance with local safeguarding and regulatory frameworks
- Clear communication and shared responsibility for student wellbeing

13. Breach of Policy

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in:

- Removal from online sessions
- Escalation to parents/carers and/or partner schools
- Further action in line with safeguarding, behavioural, and contractual procedures

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains aligned with:

- Safeguarding best practice
- Regulatory requirements
- Partner school expectations

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