Safeguarding Practice for Online Learning

This guidance has been designed to protect the rights of all members of NCG whilst participating in online learning activities, both formally (in class) and informally (directed and independent workshops).

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Be mindful of any personal information that may be on your desktop before sharing your screen on a call. Clear your desktop of any applications or documents that you will not be using.

Ensure your safeguarding training is up to date.

Ensure your online profile is updated on the recommended NCG digital media tool(s) you are using i.e. Microsoft Teams or Panopto. Use an appropriate and professional profile picture and update the text fields that will help the student identify who you are. Instructions for Teams.

Preparing to teach online

It is advised where possible that you record any webinar or online tutorial, most webinar tools have a record feature, you can also screen capture if preferred. At the start of the lesson, inform the learner(s) that you are videoing and audio recording the session for their safety and your own (instructions on how to do this for Teams). Advise the learners that there is no expectation they turn on their camera. State the footage will be securely stored on One Drive, Microsoft Streams or Panopto and shared with the appropriate staff members where required. The recording of the lesson will automatically be accessible on the timeline chat feed after the specific Teams meeting has finished, to support recall of information and discussion points.

Familiarise yourself with the NCG safeguarding policy and your identified College's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). Apply the same practice you would do with face to face meetings when engaging with online learning.

Ensure you have agreed the protocols and timing of all 1:1 lessons with the learners prior to taking place, including appropriate location, dress and conduct.

Online learning activities should be conducted in a suitable, quiet area, and webcams should ideally be sited against a neutral background or, ideally be blurred or have a virtual background. If no such area or background is available, only audio should be used with no inappropriate sounds in the background. We expect staff to be appropriately dressed (business casual) attire.

Establish a professional manner when conducting live webinars and online tutorials. At the beginning of the call, outline the working practice of the webinar or online tutorial. Set expectations of learners in relation to online delivery. Remember - you remain an employee of NCG throughout the session.

Do not allow learners to wear inappropriate attire on camera: If this happens, terminate the call and communicate the reason afterwards.

Ask everyone to mute their microphones until the teacher/educator advises otherwise. This helps to avoid cross talk, audio issues and will ensure everyone can clearly hear the teacher/educator. Ask learners to utilise the message section to engage with the teacher/educator. Be mindful of the language that is used and take time to moderate this interaction during your webinar. Remind learners that comments included within chat functions may appear on the recorded videos available at the end of the session. Do not act in a way that can be perceived as intrusive, patronising, sarcastic or insensitive.

Establish the timeline by which you will respond to learners questions/queries outside of the online session. This will depend on workload, personal circumstances and working patterns of staff. However, clarity will help meet students' expectations.

Establish delivery expectations

Be punctual and courteous. Introduce yourself and take note of other attendees'/learners' names so you can address them by name. Treat this just like you would a face to face meeting with a learner or colleague, so ensure your mobile phone is off or on silent.

Content/subject matter covered should be relevant to teaching and learning, and neither the teacher/educator nor learner should make comments of a personal nature.

Staff and learners are expected to respect and observe the NCG Code of Conduct and College Student Regulations. They should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances during live streaming or when engaging with an NCG member of staff/learner.

Be especially mindful that learners who are young and/or vulnerable don't become emotionally reliant on you, particularly if the learner is going through difficulties themselves. Ensure your contact with all learners is appropriate and relevant to the lesson and curriculum.

If a learner behaves in a manner that you deem unacceptable, remove them from the webinar immediately and explain the reason afterwards. It may be necessary to take further action if this happens, in accordance with your college Behaviour Management Policy (policy wording may vary between colleges) just as you would with a face-to-face lesson. You should then report and document the incident accordingly.

Report all concerns about abusive behaviour, following the NCG Single Safeguarding Policy and college Safeguarding procedures.

Do not let any learners have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account