

Xpact Online Safety & Digital Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Statement

Xpact is committed to ensuring that all children, young people, vulnerable adults, and mentors are protected while using digital platforms as part of our mentoring programmes.

Online mentoring through gaming introduces exciting opportunities — but also unique safeguarding risks. We take these seriously and ensure safe, responsible, and respectful digital interaction.

This policy supports our compliance with:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025*
- *UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018*
- *Children Act 1989 & 2004*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*
- Guidance from CEOP, UK Safer Internet Centre, and NSPCC

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, mentors, volunteers, and contractors using digital tools to communicate or engage with children and vulnerable adults
- Any child, young person, or adult at risk involved in Xpact's digital programmes
- Any devices, platforms, or software used as part of service delivery

3. Key Objectives

We aim to:

- Protect children and vulnerable adults from harm in digital spaces
- Set clear rules for safe and professional online behaviour
- Provide guidance on appropriate use of gaming platforms and communication tools
- Prevent online abuse, grooming, bullying, and exploitation

- Promote digital literacy and responsible online conduct

4. Approved Platforms and Tools

Xpact uses a controlled set of platforms for mentoring and communication. These may include:

- Gaming platforms (e.g., Minecraft, Roblox, etc.)
- Voice and video tools (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, Discord)
- Chat functions (within platforms, and where possible, moderated)
- Internal mentoring dashboards or learning platforms

We ensure all tools used:

- Meet appropriate security and data protection standards
- Have moderation or access controls
- Are age-appropriate and understood by both mentors and mentees
- Are approved by the DSL or technical lead

5. Online Conduct and Behaviour

All staff, mentors, and participants are expected to:

- Use respectful, professional language at all times
- Keep communication within agreed hours and platforms
- Never exchange personal contact details (e.g., phone numbers, social media)
- Never communicate privately outside of monitored channels
- Avoid screensharing, camera use, or file transfers without permission
- Maintain clear professional boundaries — no “friending”, gifting, or gaming together outside scheduled sessions

Mentors must never meet mentees in person unless formally organised and approved by management and safeguarding staff.

6. Monitoring and Moderation

- All digital mentoring sessions are either recorded, logged, or moderated, depending on the platform used

- Session records are reviewed periodically for quality assurance and safeguarding
- Any concerns are logged immediately in line with our Safeguarding Policy

Where sessions happen on gaming platforms:

- Chat may be logged or screenshot if issues arise
- Users may be muted or removed if rules are broken
- Moderators may “drop in” on sessions for spot checks

7. Risks We Manage

Xpact actively works to prevent or respond to:

Risk	How We Manage It
Grooming	DBS checks, strict boundaries, monitored platforms
Cyberbullying	Session rules, blocking/reporting tools, code of conduct
Inappropriate content	Use of child-friendly, pre-approved games and tools
Online radicalisation	Mentor training and safeguarding vigilance
Data breaches	Secure platforms, no personal data shared in chat

8. Training and Education

All mentors and staff receive:

- Online safety and digital safeguarding training during induction
- Regular updates and refreshers (at least annually)
- Platform-specific training for tools like Discord, Zoom, Minecraft, etc.

We also provide guidance to young people and families on:

- Using the internet safely
- Recognising unsafe online behaviour
- How to report concerns or block users

9. Responding to Online Incidents

All digital safety concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately.

Examples include:

- Inappropriate messages or images
- Breaches of mentor-child boundaries
- Cyberbullying or trolling
- Suspicion of grooming or radicalisation
- Technical issues that could compromise safety (e.g., hacked accounts)

Where needed, we will:

- Suspend or block users
- Involve social services, police, or the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP)
- Inform parents/carers appropriately
- Record all incidents securely

10. Parental Engagement

We involve parents/carers by:

- Explaining how mentoring sessions work
- Sharing online safety tips and platform settings
- Encouraging open conversations at home
- Providing a direct contact for concerns or feedback

We require parental consent for all under-18s and provide an Online Safety Notice for families.

11. Policy Review and Oversight

This policy is reviewed annually, or when:

- Platforms or tools change
- Online risks evolve
- Significant incidents occur

Last Reviewed: October 2025

Next Review Due: October 2026

Policy Owner: E Collins

12. Related Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection & Privacy Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Mentor Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure