

# Wild Arts Online Safety Policy

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, staff, and volunteers at Wild Arts when using technology and accessing online resources. This policy outlines the responsibilities, procedures, and guidelines for creating a safe online environment, acknowledging that we primarily use online platforms for research and supporting ongoing projects, in line with our forest school ethos and the Reggio Emilia approach.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all children, staff, volunteers, and other individuals who use Wild Arts' IT systems, personal devices, or online platforms affiliated with Wild Arts. It covers the use of technology within the organisation and extends to any remote learning or project-based online activities.

## 3. Aims

- To protect children from online risks such as cyberbullying, grooming, exploitation, and exposure to inappropriate content.
- To educate staff and children on the safe and responsible use of the internet and digital devices.
- To ensure all online activities align with safeguarding practices and data protection regulations.
- To establish clear reporting mechanisms for any online safety concerns.

## 4. Key Principles

- **Awareness and Education:** Wild Arts is committed to educating children, staff, and volunteers about the risks associated with online activities and the importance of online safety. Regular training sessions will ensure that everyone understands safe online practices.
- **Supervision:** Children's use of the internet at Wild Arts will be supervised at all times by staff, with age-appropriate, filtered content. We will use technology to support research and ongoing projects, ensuring that it enhances our educational approach without exposing children to risks.
- **Safe Platforms:** Wild Arts will use secure and approved platforms for communication, research, and learning. We will ensure that personal data protection and privacy are upheld.
- **Reporting:** Any concerns about online abuse, exploitation, or inappropriate content should be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or a senior member of staff. Children and staff are encouraged to speak up if they experience or witness harmful behaviour online.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** The DSL will oversee the implementation of the online safety policy, ensuring that any issues related to online safety are handled appropriately. They will also be responsible for training staff and monitoring online activities.
- **Staff:** All staff members must follow the online safety policy, promoting safe online behaviour and reporting incidents. They are responsible for ensuring that any online activity supports the school's educational approach while maintaining a secure environment.
- **Children:** Children are encouraged to engage in safe and respectful online practices, particularly when using technology for research or project collaboration.
- **Parents/Guardians:** Parents/guardians are key partners in supporting online safety. They will receive resources and guidance to help them ensure safe technology use at home and are encouraged to have open discussions with their children about online activity.

## 6. Online Risks and Safeguarding Measures

- **Cyberbullying:** Any form of cyberbullying (harassment, threats, or abuse) is not tolerated. Incidents will be handled according to the Wild Arts Anti-Bullying Policy and may involve disciplinary action.
- **Grooming and Exploitation:** Wild Arts implements filtering and monitoring systems to prevent children from accessing harmful content or being exposed to online predators. Staff are trained to identify and report signs of grooming.
- **Inappropriate Content:** Internet filters block access to inappropriate websites, and staff will regularly review these filters. Children are educated on how to react if they come across harmful content.
- **Data Protection:** Wild Arts complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), ensuring that personal information is safeguarded. Children's data is used strictly for educational purposes, and staff are trained on data privacy and security.

## 7. Online Communication

- **Safe Communication:** All communication between children and staff will take place through secure, approved channels, ensuring that project-related communication adheres to safeguarding guidelines.

## 8. Mobile Phone Use

Only Wild Arts leaders are permitted to use mobile phones during sessions. This is to ensure that the focus remains on the educational activities and safety of the children. Any mobile phone usage by leaders is limited to, photographs, nature identification apps, relevant research, communication with parents or caregivers, communication with emergency services or other services relevant in the operating of our day-to-day business.

- Mariana Peron and Samantha Sheldrake are also the only staff members authorized to take photographs using their mobile phones.

## **9. Remote Learning and Project Support**

- **Remote Learning Guidelines:** If remote learning or project collaboration is required, Wild Arts will use secure, child-friendly platforms. Staff will follow safeguarding protocols, and parents will be informed about how to support their child's safety during online engagement.

## **10. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the safeguarding team to ensure it remains effective and aligned with technological developments. Wild Arts will update its practices in line with online safety best practices.

## **11. Policy Violations**

Any breach of this policy by staff, children, or volunteers will be investigated and could result in disciplinary action. Serious violations may be reported to external authorities, including the police, in line with safeguarding protocols.