Online Child Protection and Safeguarding

UCL Access and Widening Participation Office

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Introduction

This document has been produced by the UCL Access and Widening Participation Office (AWPO) to outline the principles that we follow in our online activities with young people under the age of 18. It is an addendum to the [UCL Widening Participation Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](). Any and all staff involved in the delivery and supervision of online work must be familiar with, and adhere to, this policy. This includes AWPO staff members, staff employed by other UCL departments, temporary student workers, such as Student Ambassadors or Taster Presenters and staff from partner organisations.

This document was written with specific reference to online activities including, but not limited to, the use of online platforms for instant messaging/chat, recorded sessions streamed live, live lectures, webinars, mentoring, Q&A sessions and long term or intensive programmes delivered online such as summer schools.

Safeguarding concerns can take many forms including, but not limited to, bullying and cyber bullying, child sexual exploitation/trafficking, domestic abuse, emotional abuse, grooming, neglect, online abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. Abuse could be by adults, or other children/young people.

Safeguarding concerns may relate to an incident that took place during or after an event, or that a staff member or participant has become aware of as a result of the event. This could include something a staff member or participant

has said, something about a participant's appearance or something that was seen or overheard in the background of a video feed.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment for AWPO online activity can be found on our [website]().

Online Platforms

Any AWPO online activity will take place on approved online platforms only.

These platforms must have the following features:

- The platform is appropriate to the age group of participants.
- Only those who have registered for an activity are able to take part in it.
- Contact details of participants must not be visible publically, to other participants or to anyone other than authorised staff.
- If any staff contact details are visible, they are limited to the UCL email addresses of staff.
- Staff are able to review and moderate messages, with the ability to delete messages where necessary.
- Staff are able to temporarily mute or remove a participant from the platform if necessary.
- In the case of repeated inappropriate behaviour, staff are able to permanently exclude a participant from an activity.

DBS checks

All staff who have administrator rights on a platform and are carrying out tasks that require them to have access to participant contact details must have received child protection training and have a clear Enhanced DBS check with UCL. This applies to AWPO staff, those from other departments and to student workers.

Types of online activity

Fully moderated online activity

On some projects, UCL works with trusted partners to deliver fully moderated online activity through secure online platforms. This includes mentoring for young people by student workers, the ability to submit academic work and receive a grade, and fully moderated messaging to facilitate group work between participants, overseen by student workers. All interactions go through a vetting process before being released to participants to ensure that contact details are not shared and that topics under discussion are appropriate.

Online events

UCL uses approved platforms to host online events which include live interaction between participants and staff (including AWPO staff, academic staff and student workers). These may include live or pre-recorded lectures or talks, Q&A sessions, instant messaging/chat, and collaborative work in small groups.

Staff roles at online events

For the purpose of online events, staff fit into three distinct groups:

- **Co-ordinator** – This is an AWPO staff member with a DBS check who is supervising an online event. They will act as a platform administrator and/or a presenter during an event and have oversight of all sessions taking place.
- **Administrator** – This is a UCL staff member from outside the AWPO, or a student worker, with a DBS check. They will act as a platform administrator and/or a presenter during an event and will assist the Co-ordinator with tasks such as moderation of specific sessions.
- **Presenter** – This is a staff member who is working on an event (for example, delivering a presentation or answering questions) but who does not have platform administrator rights. A DBS is not required and this person should not have access to contact details of participants. They are accompanied by an Administrator or a Co-ordinator at all times.

Staffing levels at online events

UCL AWPO ensure that staffing levels are sufficient to meet the following requirements at all times:

- When any aspect of an online event is underway, a Co-ordinator is on duty and acting in a supervisory capacity. The Co-ordinator must have access to all sessions that are taking place.
- Within any online session, regardless of group size or participant interaction, two staff must be present at all times and at least one of these must be an Administrator or Co-ordinator.
- If there are thirteen or more participants in a group, three staff, including at least one Co-ordinator or Administrator, must be present at all times.
- Staff members are not able to moderate and present at the same time. Sufficient cover should be in place to avoid this happening.
- If staff numbers fall below the required level, an event will be suspended or stopped completely if sufficient cover cannot be found quickly.

Principles UCL AWPO staff follow when running online events

- Only approved platforms are used to host the event.
- The structure and content of activity is carefully planned to ensure discussions stay on topic.
- Staffing is arranged to ensure that minimum ratios can be met at all times.
- Events take place in a specific online space at a specific time.

Unplanned interaction outside of these parameters is not possible on the platform.
- All staff are aware of the safeguarding processes in place and their own responsibilities as they relate to the safeguarding of participants.
- All staff acting as Co-ordinators and Administrators have received child protection training, have a clear enhanced DBS check and are familiar with the safeguarding reporting procedures.
- A Co-ordinator is on duty to act in a supervisory role when any online activity is taking place.
- A Designated Safeguarding Officer is on duty to advise on any concerns and take any action required when any online activity is taking place.
- Staff acting as Co-ordinators or Administrators ensure that privacy settings are correct and know how to moderate comments, mute speakers or remove someone from the event, if necessary.
- All participants are required to agree to a Code of Conduct prior to taking part. This covers issues such as protecting themselves and others by not sharing contact information or trying to contact other people, the need to treat fellow participants and staff with respect and the process to follow in order to report any concerns.
- For those participants in Year 11 or below, and those in Years 12 and 13 attending an online event that takes place on multiple dates,

parents/carers are also asked to agree to ensure that the participant complies with the Code of Conduct.

- At the beginning of the event, a designated member of staff will take a register to ensure that all participants have registered and remind all participants of the conduct standards they have agreed to follow.
- Throughout an event, designated staff are responsible for monitoring verbal exchanges and instant messaging/chat.
- Inappropriate behaviour or comments are dealt with immediately, which may involve muting or removing a participant from the activity or the platform, either temporarily or permanently.