**RENEGADES YOUTH CLUB ONLINE SAFETY AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**Note:**

* the terms ‘child’ or ‘children’ apply to anyone under the age of 18
* the term ‘parent’ applies to anyone with guardianship or caring and parental responsibility for the child
* the term ‘volunteers’ applies to Group Leaders (sometimes treated separately) and parental volunteers

**Our online safety statement**

This policy provides guidance on how The Renegades uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect the volunteers who work with us, and the children who are members of the youth club, to behave online.

As an organisation, we commit to implementing this policy and addressing any concerns quickly and within these guidelines.

**Aims**

The aims of our online safety policy are:

* to protect all children involved with Renegades and who make use of technology (such as mobiles phones, games consoles and the internet) while in our care.
* to provide volunteers with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents to ensure Renegades is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online.

**Understanding the online world**

As part of using the internet and social media, Renegades will:

* assess and manage the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for volunteers and children when using websites, social media including WhatsApp, Signal, Spond, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter or Snapchat, apps and video conferencing platforms including Zoom or Skype.
* be aware of how volunteers in Renegades and the children they work with use social media both inside and outside of our setting.
* ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines when using social media or video conferencing platforms.
* provide training for the volunteers responsible for managing Renegades’ online presence.
* regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including:
 - making sure concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are written into our reporting procedures and incorporating online bullying (‘cyberbullying’) into our safe-guarding policy.

**Managing our online presence**
Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

* all social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least 2 volunteers will have access to each account and password.
* the account will be monitored in order to provide transparency.
* our designated safeguarding lead will advise on safeguarding requirements.
* volunteers will remove inappropriate posts by children or volunteers, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children involved).
* we’ll make sure children are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about something that’s happened online.
* identifying details such as a child’s surname, home address, school name or telephone number shouldn’t be posted on social media platforms.
* Our Facebook page settings are restricted to the UK with moderated posts and high profanity restrictions
* any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims and tone as an organisation.
* parents will be asked to give their approval for us to communicate with their children through social media, via video conferencing platforms or by any other means of communication.
* parents will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media.
* video conferencing sessions will be password protected in order to maintain children’s privacy and prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties.

**What we expect of our volunteers**

* volunteers should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.
* volunteers should seek the advice of the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
* volunteers should not communicate with children via personal accounts.
* volunteers should not ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ children from personal accounts on social media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using organisation accounts.
* volunteers should make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate, as children may ‘follow’ them on social media.
* volunteers should not delete any messages or communications sent to or from organisation accounts.
* relevant volunteers should undertake all online safety training offered and gain a basic knowledge of the platforms children use and how to report or remove inappropriate content online
* any concerns reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our reporting procedures.
* at least one parent must be present during the delivery of any activities via video conferencing platforms at home.
* any delivery of activities to children via video conferencing platforms will be supported by an additional volunteer (even if they’re not actively delivering) to ensure transparency.
* volunteers and children must not engage in ‘sexting’ or send pictures to anyone that are obscene.

**What we expect of children**

* children should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms.
* children should not use social media, the internet or email for the purposes of harassment or abuse.
* children should not use profanities, obscenities, or derogatory remarks in communications.
* children should not access, download, send or receive any data (including images), which the Renegades considers offensive in any way, including sexually explicit, discriminatory, defamatory or libellous material.
* children should not send unprotected sensitive or confidential information about Renegade members externally.

 **What we expect of parents**

* parents should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms.
* parents should protect all children’s privacy online and think carefully about what content they share about our activities online, where they share it and who they’re sharing it with.
* we expect parents’ behaviour online to be consistent with that expected of their children.

**Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate**

When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger), we’ll take the following precautions to ensure children’s safety:

* the two Group Leaders will largely communicate appropriately through WhatsApp using the Renegades group chat.
* volunteers (apart from the two Group Leaders) will avoid having children’s personal mobile numbers and will instead seek contact through a parent.
* we’ll either seek parental permission on each occasion we need to contact children directly or copy them in; the purpose for each contact will be clearly identified.
* smartphone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy.
* texts, emails or messages will be mainly used for communicating information – such as reminding children or young people about upcoming events, which kit to bring or activity timings.
* if a child misinterprets such communication and tries to engage a volunteer in individual conversation, the volunteers will take the following steps:
	+ end the conversation or stop replying.
	+ suggest discussing the subject further at the next activity or event.
	+ inform the Renegades’ safeguarding officer in the interest of transparency.
	+ if concerned about the child, provide contact details for the Renegades’ designated safeguarding lead or appropriate agencies and report any concerns using the Renegades’ reporting procedures.

**Using mobile phones during activities**

So that all children can enjoy and actively take part in activities, we discourage the use of mobile phones during such activities. As part of this policy, we will:

* make children aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements with Renegades.
* inform parents of appropriate times they can contact children who are away at camps or away trips and discourage them from attempting contact outside of these times.
* advise parents that it may not be possible to contact children during activities and provide a contact within the Renegades who will be reachable should there be an emergency.
* explain to children how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their safe awareness of their environment, and their level of participation and achievement.

**Important contacts**

Contacts for parents, children and volunteers in relation to this policy and online safety:

Safeguarding: Cal Given

Website: Vanda Miller

Contacts: Gareth Miller

 **April 2023**