

Safeguarding Policy - COVID-19 online activities



The purpose and scope of this policy statement

This document is an addition to, and should be read in conjunction with, Learn to Love to Read's (L2L2R) safeguarding policy. It covers additional online activities taking place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As volunteers are unable to visit schools to carry out their one-to-reading sessions with children, L2L2R has developed an online version of this intervention using video conferencing software (Zoom).

L2L2R takes the safeguarding of the children and families it works with, and of its staff and volunteers, extremely seriously. We believe that children should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

This policy applies to all staff, including the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of L2L2R.

The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children who receive L2L2R's services via video conferencing.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection online.

Contact details

Designated safeguarding lead

Teresa Harris

teresa@learn2love2read.org.uk

Deputy safeguarding lead

Anna Culwick

anna@learn2love2read.org.uk

Trustee with specific responsibility for safeguarding

Wendy Livingstone

safeguarding@learn2love2read.org.uk

The designated safeguarding lead, deputy and safeguarding trustee have received safeguarding training from Wandsworth Council.

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Safer staff and volunteers

Training

All existing volunteers wishing to take part in virtual reading sessions will receive additional safeguarding training prior to starting. This will include a refresher on L2L2R's safeguarding policy and the latest policies set out by the relevant partner organisations and the government as appropriate.

All new volunteers must undertake L2L2R's full safeguarding training and make required declarations as stated in L2L2R's safeguarding policy, as well as undergoing an enhanced DBS check.

All staff members and volunteers will have online access to L2L2R's safeguarding policy and related documents, the Department for Education's '*Keeping Children Safe in Education*' document, and our partner schools' own safeguarding policies. This information will include copies of the school's safeguarding report form, the names of the Designated Safeguarding Officers and details of steps to take if a staff member or volunteer is concerned.

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Volunteer and staff code of conduct additions for online reading sessions

L2L2R's volunteer and staff code of conduct outlined in the safeguarding policy applies in the same way when working online with children.

The following additions have been made for online working via video conferencing:

Do:

- Ensure your background while video conferencing is neutral and avoids displaying personal information such as family photographs.
- Ensure you are wearing your L2L2R lanyard to confirm your identity
- Use L2L2R's Zoom accounts when sending invitations and running online reading sessions
- Ensure your location is quiet and interruption-free
- Only communicate via agreed channels
- Only contact families at the agreed time
- Report allegations or suspicions of abuse following L2L2R's reporting procedures

Don't:

- Use personal Zoom accounts to contact families
- Record virtual reading sessions unless agreed in writing beforehand with all parties
- Allow concerns or allegations to go unreported

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Keeping children safe online

L2L2R is committed to keeping children safe during its virtual reading sessions. Parents/carers will first be approached by their children's school about taking part in the sessions and will have previously consented to the school passing on their contact information to L2L2R.

All parents/carers are required to give L2L2R their consent via an online form before children can take part in a session. The consent form sets out our expectations and how we aim to safeguard children during these sessions.

We ask parents/carers to agree that:

- A parent or carer must be present with the child and visible to the volunteer at all times during the session
- Children must be in a suitable space (ideally sitting room or kitchen, not bedroom) where they can see and hear the volunteer clearly
- Children should be suitably dressed in appropriate daywear (no night clothes)
- Children under 16 are not allowed to set up their own Zoom account
- Volunteers will only contact parents and children at the agreed times
- Volunteers should not be invited to Zoom meetings by parents or children
- Parents/carers understand that Zoom collects data from users (www.zoom.us/privacy)
- L2L2R will store contact details in order to contact parents about their child's reading support

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Reporting safeguarding concerns

- As outlined in L2L2R's safeguarding policy, volunteers will need to share any concerns with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. The names and contact details of all our partner school's designated safeguarding leads will be given to volunteers during their training and updated annually.
- Volunteers must report the incident to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead by phone and follow up with an email clarifying the details. The school will then take appropriate action.
- Volunteers will also need to report the incident to L2L2R's designated Safeguarding Lead, Teresa Harris, at teresa@learn2love2read.org.uk. Personal details should not be included in this report – just the date of the incident and confirmation that it has been reported to the school as required. This is to ensure all incidents are documented in our confidential Safeguarding Report document. This document is intended to ensure that correct procedures were followed and to highlight any further action required on our part.
- Do not discuss the incident with anyone else.
- Within one week, L2L2R will check with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the relevant partner school that appropriate follow up action has been taken.

Anyone who wishes to report a safeguarding incident about a member of L2L2R staff or one of our volunteers should use the email address specifically set up for this purpose: safeguarding@learn2love2read.org.uk.