Safely Teaching and Meeting Online Policy

Effective for employees, learners, Directors and volunteers on or after 1 September 2023
Date of next Review: September 2026

Please Note: A formal, full review of this document will take place on a 3-yearly basis. However, in the interim, the document will be updated as necessary to remain current with any statutory legislation and/or significant Government guidance updates on the subject.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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AUTHOR:	FRAN DEELEY
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Fran Deeley

Signature: ___ ____ **Date:** 21.07.23

Designation: Chief Executive Officer **Review Date:** September 2023

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1. Our commitment

ESS Education and Support Services are committed to ensuring best practice is followed, in relation to safely teaching and/or meeting online, when virtual lessons, workshops and/or meetings are required for any reason.

2. Objectives

The aim of this policy is to embed best practice for lessons/meetings carried out virtually, thereby safeguarding both ESS Staff and Learners, from any risks of online abuse or inappropriate behaviour during online lessons, workshops or meetings; or allegations against ESS Education and Support Services staff or Learners in relation to such abuse or behaviours.

3. Key contacts

- Fran Deeley – Chief Executive Officer – fran.deeley@myess.co.uk
- Kelly Criddle – Chief Operations Officer (Deputy DSL) – Kelly.criddle@myess.co.uk
- Tyler Whitehouse – Chief Strategy Officer (Designated Safeguarding Lead) – Tyler.whitehouse@myess.co.uk

4. Scope

This policy applies to all ESS Education and Support Staff staff and Learners. It provides guidance on best practice to follow; to safely conduct meetings, workshops and lessons online.

All self-employed contractors should be made aware of this policy and understand their responsibilities within it.

5. Definitions

When we refer to 'On-line' we mean any virtual platform utilised for the purpose of conducting meetings or lessons, workshops and training remotely (i.e. not face to face).

6. Safely Teaching and Meeting Online – Best Practice and Guidance

ESS Education and Support Services recommends that the following actions be carried out, to ensure that both ESS staff, Learners and any others, attending online lessons or meetings, are safeguarded from any abuse, unacceptable behaviour or allegations thereof.

- Utilise a Platform for the Meeting/lessons which provides maximum security to participants (i.e. cannot be 'bombed' or 'raided' allowing unwanted, disruptive intrusion, generally by Internet trolls, into a video-conference call).
  a. MS Teams is recommended for this purpose; as it can only be accessed by those invited to attend.
  b. Zoom – if using Zoom, it is important to have the Waiting Room function enabled, so that the Chair (or designated colleague) can vet those accessing the meeting.
  c. Any other platform – If using any other platform, ensure it has a security facility (e.g. a waiting room etc.) to enable participants to be screened before they are allowed to join the meeting.

- Send all expected participants, prior to the meeting, the expected etiquette to follow during the meeting and what they can expect:
  a. When logging in to the Meeting/lesson platform, they should use their name (or an alternative agreed with the host beforehand – in the case of a sensitive meeting/workshop); so that the host can easily identify them to allow them entry into the session.

  b. All cameras should be switched on to allow participants to see each other.

c. Microphones should be muted, except when speaking within the meeting, to reduce feedback and background noise, thereby assisting the meeting to go more smoothly.

d. The Lesson/meeting will be recorded (this is not necessary for internal meetings where all attendees agree it is unnecessary). Please Note: Recordings of the lessons/Meetings, will be held securely, in line with GDPR regulations and will only be accessed:
   i. in the event of an incident or allegation being raised
   ii. Occasionally by the Secretariat, for meetings, to ensure Minutes are accurate.
   iii. Occasionally by an IQA if needed to carry out a remote lesson observation

   Recording Lessons is a necessity, to safeguard participants as, if any allegations are made by any attendee, following the meeting, the recording can be made available to those investigating the allegation (e.g. the Police).

e. Please Note: For those individuals uncomfortable with having a session recorded, which will therefore record their image, please discuss with the Lesson/Meeting host to agree a way forward. This could include:
   i. The Host explaining how the background can be blurred, if the participant is uncomfortable with their home background being recorded.
   ii. Agreeing that any responses to question during the session can be via the Chat function, if the participant doesn't like the idea of having their voice recorded
   iii. The Host providing reassurance that the individual's image will not be used for any other purposes e.g. marketing.

- At the beginning of each online lesson or workshop, the Teaching & Learning Mentor, should re-confirm British Values, to remind all participants that they should behave respectfully towards one another, throughout the session.

There may be other activities you identify to help you teach or meet safely online. Please share these with colleagues as appropriate and advise the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who can arrange to have this policy updated accordingly.

8. Additional support

If you require any additional support or advice, in relation to this policy, please contact your Teaching Learning Mentor, one of the managers listed in Section 3 of this document or a member of the HR Team.

9. Associated policies

- Confidentiality Policy
- GDPR and Data Protection Policy
- Online and Social Media Safety Policy

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