



Online Safety Policy

Reviewed: February 2025

Phab Ltd recognises that the internet and technology are an integral part of everyday life for most people and acknowledges the positive opportunities the internet provides.

Phab Ltd also acknowledges that disabled children and some disabled adults are more likely to experience online issues such as cyberbullying, online grooming and exploitation and Phab Ltd must ensure that it meets its obligations to ensure that everyone is safe and protected from potential harm.

Phab Ltd will provide the necessary safeguards to help ensure that it has done everything that could reasonably be expected of it to manage and reduce risks. This online safety policy explains how Phab intends to do this, while also addressing wider issues in order to help vulnerable people (and their families and support workers) to be responsible users and stay safe while using the internet and other communications technologies.

This policy provides guidelines and working practices for the effective and safe use of the internet, email and other communications technologies during Phab Ltd activities, so that everyone has the confidence and skills to face and deal with the risks.

Responsibilities

Phab Trustees: Phab Trustees are responsible for the approval of this policy and for reviewing its effectiveness on. This will be carried out by the Trustees annually (or before if necessary)

Designated Safeguarding Lead: The DSL will take day to day responsibility for online safety issues. They will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of

the procedures that need to be followed in the event of an online safety incident taking place. They will keep up to date with current guidelines and keep the Trustees informed of incidents and issues. **Phab DSL:** Dawn Vickers, Co-Chief Executive Officer Tel: 020 86679443. Email: dawn.vickers@phab.org.uk

Staff and volunteers: All staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that:

- They have an up-to-date awareness of online safety matters and of Phab's policy and practices
- They report any suspected misuse or problem to Phab's Safeguarding Lead for investigation/action/sanction
- Digital communications should be on a professional and appropriate level
- Phab Staff, volunteers, members, their families, support workers etc understand and follow Phab's online safety policy and standards use via an accepted Code of Conduct
- Ensure Everyone is aware of the Phab Code of Conduct for online meetings/events. This Code of Conduct must be easily accessible to everyone by making it available on the Phab website.

Phab understands that not everybody is experienced or fully understands the issues in the use of ICT and will therefore take every opportunity to help. Phab will do this by sharing information via our newsletter, website and other appropriate methods.

Use of Digital and Video Images

The development of digital imaging technologies has created significant benefits to many, allowing people instant use of images that they have recorded themselves or downloaded from the internet. However, everyone needs to be aware of the risks associated with sharing images and with posting digital images on the internet. Those images may remain available on the internet forever and may cause harm or embarrassment to individuals in the short or longer term.

Phab will inform and educate staff, volunteers and members about the risks involved in using digital and video images, including:

- The risks associated with the taking, use, sharing, publication and distribution of images, particularly the risks attached to publishing their own images on the internet e.g. on social networking sites
- That staff, volunteers and participants are appropriately dressed and are not taking part in activities that might bring the individuals or Phab into disrepute
- Phab Ltd staff, volunteers and participants must take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others including social media platforms without their permission or, in the case of a child, without their parents/guardian's permission
- Photographs published on Phab Ltd website or elsewhere that include Adventure Residential participants, Phab Club members, and their families or volunteers will be carefully selected and comply with good practice guidance on the use of such images
- Full names will not be used anywhere online, particularly in association with photographs, without the individual's or parent/guardian permission.

Mobile Device Use on Phab Adventure Residentials

Phab Ltd is aware that more and more children and young people have access to phones and tablets in their day to day lives. Children are requested not to bring mobile phone or tablets to the Phab Adventure Residentials.

All Wi-Fi is password protected at the Outdoor Centres Phab Ltd attends and will not be given to anyone under the age of 18 years. However, Phab Ltd is aware that some children need these devices for communication or to ease extreme anxiety.

Therefore, Phab has Mobile Device Use Guidelines (Phone, iPad etc.) for all children and young people attending a Phab Adventure Residential. Everyone attending a Phab Adventure Residential including Staff, volunteers, the children and their parents, guardians etc. will be made aware of these guidelines and any person-centred requirements can be discussed.

Social Media and Private Messaging Note: see Phab Ltd Social Media Policy

Phab Ltd staff and volunteers aged 18 or over, do not add as a “friend” or follow on a social network site the following:

- Participants under the age of 18
- Adults at risk – participants that need parental or appropriate adult consent to attend activities

Private Messaging: If someone needs to email or send a private message to any member in the category above, multiple recipients should be included. Remember that private messaging can be seen in the same manner as being alone in a room with a young person or adult at risk.

If anybody has a concern about any message or photography posted on a social media site, website etc, they should inform the Phab Ltd Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Unsuitable / Inappropriate activities

Phab believes that the activities listed below would be inappropriate in the context of Phab Ltd Meetings, events, Phab Adventure Residentials and online events. Staff, volunteers and participants should not engage in these activities, visit internet sites or make, post, download, upload, data transfer, communicate or pass on, material, remarks, proposals or comments that contain or relate to:

- Promotion of any kind of discrimination, exploitation or harassment
- Promotion of racial, religious hatred or criminally racist material
- Threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm
- Information which may be offensive or breaches the integrity of Phab ethos or brings Phab into disrepute
- Child sexual abuse images
- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts e.g. drug use, fraud
- Adult material that potentially breaches the Obscene Publications Act
- Pornography
- Upload, download or transmit commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, without the necessary licensing permissions

- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial / personal information, databases, computer or network access codes and passwords)
- Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files
- On-line gambling

Responding to Incidents of Misuse

It is hoped that all members of the Phab Ltd community will be responsible users of ICT, who understand and follow this policy. However, there may be times when infringements of the policy could take place, through carelessness or irresponsible use or, very rarely, through deliberate misuse. Listed below are the responses that will be made to any apparent or actual incidents of misuse.

If any apparent or actual misuse appears to involve illegal activity i.e.

- child sexual abuse images
- adult material which potentially breaches the Obscene Publications Act
- criminally racist material and or other criminal conduct, activity or materials

then the standard procedure for safeguarding, as set out in the Phab Safeguarding Policy, will be instigated.

For incidents that involve inappropriate rather than illegal misuse, it is important that any incidents are dealt with as soon as possible in a proportionate manner such as a warning, advice, further training or support as stated in the Phab Ltd Safeguarding Policy and through normal disciplinary procedures.

Further Information and Resources

Learning Disabilities, Autism and Internet Safety:

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-11/Internet-Safety-web-2016.pdf>

Keeping Children Safe Online; including Parental Controls, Internet Connected Devices and Inappropriate or Explicit Content:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

