



# The Birtenshaw Group

## Transforming Lives

### **Birtenshaw Education Services E-safety Policy**

Document Title	E-safety Policy
Reference Number	ED20
Version Number	Version 1
Date of Issue	Sept 2018
Latest Revision	Sept 2023
Distribution	Education staff
Owner	Chief Executive
Policy Lead(s)	Head of Service: Head of School
Department	Education

#### **Rationale:**

The aim of Birtenshaw is 'Transforming Lives'. In order to achieve this aim, pupils/learners need to be safe and feel safe in the real and virtual world.

All pupils/learners within Birtenshaw Education Services have a Special Educational Needs and/or Disability.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy, Counter-Bullying Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

Birtenshaw Education Services recognises that the Internet and digital technologies provide a vast opportunity for pupils/learners to learn, socialise and play. More than any other mode of technology, the Internet and digital technologies allow all those involved in working with pupils/learner to promote creativity, stimulate awareness and enhance learning and communication skills.

Birtenshaw is committed to harnessing the power of the Internet and other digital technologies to enhance the activities the pupils/learner choose to be engaged in. We are also dedicated to ensuring that it helps the pupils/learner who access its services to have the skills of critical awareness, digital literacy and good online citizenship to enable them to use the Internet and other digital technologies safely.

However the need to keep people safe from the inappropriate material on the Internet is paramount. This policy is therefore aimed at developing an approach to E-safety, to protect pupils/learner supported by Birtenshaw when accessing the Internet and digital technologies.

Birtenshaw recognises, as part of this policy, that there should be equitable opportunities for all pupils/learner using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and that for people with a disability in particular it can offer increased opportunities for communication.

Birtenshaw also recognises that disabled people may be particularly vulnerable to abuse via the internet or be less able to understand how to keep themselves safe.

### **Our commitment:**

Birtenshaw is committed to ensuring that all pupils/learner using our services will be able to use existing, as well as up and coming technologies safely. We are also committed to ensuring that all those who work with pupils/learner are educated as to the dangers that exist so that they can take an active part in safeguarding pupils/learner.

As part of achieving the above, the service will seek to ensure that E-safety awareness is integrated in to appropriate activities for people; and training will be made available to staff members that supervise them, manage and/or support the facilities that are being used.

### **Scope**

For the purposes of this document, ICT means any connection to the Internet via web browsing, external email, messaging services and any use of mobile or digital technologies e.g. mobile phone, including Bluetooth applications and so on. This also includes use of social media sites, Skype and other video messaging communications and the use of online games.

This policy applies to all of Birtenshaw's services. The policy is also recommended as good practice to any partner organisations that work with the young people who live in Birtenshaw's children's homes or adult supported tenancies.

Birtenshaw will seek to ensure that across our services the following elements will be in place as part of its safeguarding responsibilities to pupils/learner:

- The manager of each service will deal with safeguarding issues and E-safety
- Adequate training for staff and volunteers
- Adequate supervision of pupils/learner when using the Internet and digital technologies;
- Talking and showing pupils/learner about how to use the Internet and digital technologies safely;
- A reporting procedure for safeguarding concerns connected with pupils/learner using the Internet and digital technologies.

## **Policies and Practices**

This policy aims to ensure that the Internet and digital technologies are used effectively for their intended educational and recreational purposes, without infringing legal requirements or creating unnecessary risk.

All of Birtenshaw's services will ensure that pupils/learner are encouraged to use the Internet and digital technologies responsibly according to the conditions below.

### **Use of the Internet:**

In order to ensure that people are safeguarded whilst using ICT, they shall be directed to not:

Visit Internet sites, make, post, download, upload or pass on, material, remarks, proposals or comments that contain or relate to:

- Indecent images of children
- Promoting discrimination of any kind
- Promoting racial or religious hatred
- Promoting illegal acts
- Any other information which may be offensive to peers or colleagues e.g. abusive images; promotion of violence; gambling; criminally racist or religious hatred material.

People shall be informed of the risks associated with visiting such sites and advised why such behaviour is inappropriate.

Incidents which appear to involve deliberate access to websites which are considered unsuitable such as indecent images, adult material, racist or anti-religious, illegal substance use, violence, any other criminal activity, will be reported to parents/carers/social worker and placing authority and a planning meeting held.

### **Use of Social Media Sites/Online Games:**

Birtenshaw recognises that social media sites can be used to communicate with peers, support positive relationships and develop a sense of identity. We also recognise that use of online games can be seen as a positive activity for people. However, use of online social networks or games may place people at risk. Potential risks include, but are not limited to:

- bullying by peers and people considered 'friends'
- posting personal information that can identify and locate a child offline
- sexual grooming, luring , exploitation and abuse
- contact with strangers
- exposure to racist or hate material
- encouragement of violent behaviour, such as 'happy slapping'
- glorifying activities such as drug taking or excessive drinking

- physical harm to young people in making video content, such as enacting and imitating stunts and risk taking activities
- leaving and running away from home as a result of contacts made online.

In order to limit the risks posed to a person, Birtenshaw will:

- Encourage people to tell staff if any messages or icons appear that make them feel uncomfortable or if they are unsure where (or who) they came from.
- Teach people how to report cases of cyberbullying
- Encourage people not to give away any personal information e.g. name, location, age, date of birth or any other personal information
- Discourage people from using a current picture of themselves
- Talk to people about safe online activity and advise them to bring any concerns about anything they have seen online to a member of staff.

### **Use of Video Messaging:**

People supported by Birtenshaw may use video messaging communications. We encourage the use of these methods of communication, as a means of maintaining contact with family or friends. However, we recognise that they may place people at risk.

Birtenshaw staff will discuss e-safety with any person who uses video messaging technology. Staff members will explain who it is appropriate to have such contact with. People will be encouraged to tell staff if any strangers contact them through video messaging communications.

### **Use of mobile technologies:**

People will not use mobile technologies or mobile internet services in any way to intimidate, threaten or cause harm to others. Moreover, mobile technologies should not be used to access inappropriate materials or encourage activities that are dangerous or illegal.

### **Inappropriate use of the internet:**

It is the responsibility of staff members to ensure that each person in Birtenshaw's services are safeguarded whilst using the Internet. Each device which has access to the internet is equipped with web-blocking software, which prevents access to inappropriate websites. If a person is found to be accessing a website which is deemed inappropriate but has not been blocked by the software, members of staff may refer this to Birtenshaw's ICT support company in order to ensure that a block is put on this website.

Staff members may conclude that a person's use of technology needs to be moderated in order to keep them safe. If a decision to moderate a person's use of a device is

taken, this should be carefully planned, taking into account the person's right to privacy and their need to develop personal relationships. Moderation of technology will only be used as in order to safeguard people. Any moderation of technology should be reviewed regularly and ceased if it is considered that the person understands how to stay safe. Any decision will be made in consultation with parents/carers and social worker and discussed in full with the person.

### **Access to communications:**

People in Birtenshaw's care services will be provided, at all reasonable times, with access to a telephone on which to make and receive calls in private and facilities to send and receive post and electronic mail in private. These facilities will be provided for without reference to persons working in the home. Birtenshaw will provide access to such aids and equipment as any disabled person requires in order to facilitate the communication with other persons.

Any measures imposed restricting access to these facilities will only be introduced for the purposes of safeguarding people. This will only be done with the consent of the placing authority and parents or, if the measure is introduced in an emergency, the placing authority will be informed of it within 24 hours.

### **Reporting abuse**

There may be occasions when a person within a setting either receives an abusive email or accidentally accesses a website that contains abusive material. When such a situation occurs, staff members should communicate to the person why this material is abusive. This will be part of the responsibility of staff to ensure that each person has E-safety awareness.

Birtenshaw also recognises that there may be occasions where people will be the victims of inappropriate behaviour that could lead to possible or actual significant harm. In such circumstances Birtenshaw safeguarding procedures should be followed.

Such incidents will be taken seriously and where judged necessary, referred to the lead agencies involved in safeguarding.

All of Birtenshaw's services, as part of their safeguarding duties and responsibilities will, in accordance with our policies, assist and provide information and advice in support of safeguarding enquiries and criminal investigations.

### **Monitoring**

The first responsibility for monitoring the use of the Internet and digital technologies lies with the staff in each classroom or residential setting. These should include both physical observation (supervision of use by an adult, where appropriate) and local technical monitoring.