

Online Engagement Guidance Document

The following document outlines a number of important safeguarding considerations when planning your online public engagement. This document may be subject to change but all staff who have signed it will be sent updated versions as and when they are available.

Please read this document fully before signing and returning a copy to engage@wgc.org.uk to confirm you have read and understood the guidance in this document.

Safeguarding

The safety and protection of children and adults at risk is of paramount importance in engagement. The following is guidance that you must be familiar with before carrying out any online engagement. Failure to do so could put participants and yourself in danger.

In general, the same safeguarding principles apply here as do for in-person interactions. The online nature of the engagements do not change these, and as such, should be treated just as seriously. We would also recommend you become a STEM ambassador before carrying out any engagement with children or adults at risk and complete all associated training. This will provide you with a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check as well as better familiarising you with safeguarding guidance and public engagement good practice. You can find more information about the programme at their [website](#). If you would like to sign up for this programme then please get in touch with the public engagement team.

Please do contact engage@wgc.org.uk if you have any questions or queries and if you require further guidance in planning your online engagement.

Definitions

For the purposes of this document a child is defined as a person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people'.

An adult at risk may be a person who:

- Is elderly and physically disabled due to ill health or cognitive impairment;
- Has a Learning Disability;
- Has a physical disability and / or a sensory impairment;
- Has mental health needs including Dementia or a personality disorder;
- Has a long-term illness / condition;
- Misuses substances or alcohol;
- Is unable to demonstrate the capacity to make a decision relating to their safety and is in need of care and support.

The above list is not exhaustive and you should consider a person's capacity to make informed decisions about their own safety when planning work with any adult or group.

Communicating online

- Never approach children or adults at risk directly about participating in online sessions. All sessions should be coordinated through appropriate organisations and include input from the public engagement team.
- Always use appropriate language in your communications and make sure all your communications are relevant to the work of the project you're involved in.
- Use organisational accounts to communicate with children or adults at risk via email or social media, never personal accounts.
- When using messaging services we recommend passing the communication to the public engagement team to mediate the interaction. Where that is not possible - NEVER use or give out personal accounts to message a young person and always copy in engage@wgc.org.uk so there is a record of your conversation.
- Use an organisational device such as mobile, tablet or laptop to communicate with children, where possible.
- Understand how different social media platforms work and what their age limits are – for example you should never use Facebook to communicate with under 13 year-olds. Use [NetAware](#) to find out about age restrictions on social networks, apps and games.
- Always ask children or adults at risk and their responsible guardians if you want to take and/or share photos for any purpose and be sure to get written consent using the official campus [consent form](#).
- Have appropriate observation of sessions. This should include a teacher or guardian being present during the interaction or failing that a member of the public engagement team.

- Be mindful of your online presence and where possible adjust privacy settings so participating audiences cannot research you personally or find unsecure contact methods.

Live streaming

Ensure you do the following before a stream:

- Live streaming is a valuable way to connect with the wider community but you must be aware of the safety of children and adults at risk.
- If you provide participants with access to live streaming media (e.g. webcams and Skype) use an open area and make sure the activity is adequately observed (for example, teachers, parents, members of the public engagement team, or public group organisers).
- Make sure that all other documents other than ones being shared are closed and notifications of emails, slack etc are turned off.
- Ensure you are streaming with a suitable background and in a place where other people will not walk into the stream.
- Never reveal the full identity of individual participants.
- Be sensitive to the needs of those who may have safeguarding concerns. Please do loop the public engagement team to any questions regarding our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Consider whether the platform you're using allows you to restrict the audience, for example by asking them to create a login and password?
- Consider whether other people will be able to reproduce and distribute your stream?
- Check you have got consent for the participants to participate in the stream by ensuring there is written confirmation from the teacher / guardian that can be sent to the public engagement team for campus records.
- Always record the stream (with written permission from the teacher / guardian first). Where possible this will be done by a member of the public engagement team saving the recording directly to the campus servers that public engagement has access to. Where this is not possible send the recording to the public engagement team for child safety auditing as soon as possible and delete any local recordings on your device.

Ensure the teacher or guardian does the following before the stream:

- Talk to participants about online safety before the session starts.
- Make sure they understand that live streaming is live. Any comments they make will be seen (or heard) by others and they probably won't be able to delete or edit them.
- Remind them not to share any personal information and not to respond to contact requests from people they don't know.
- Make sure they know who to tell if they see or hear anything upsetting or inappropriate.

Ensure you and the teacher / guardian does the following before the stream:

- Make sure you know what content will be used in the stream and check it will be appropriate for the children who will be watching it.

- Find out how the stream will be used in the future, for example if it will be archived or broadcast again.
- Whichever platform you're using, make sure you understand the privacy settings and know how to report any offensive or abusive content.

To report any incidents or concerns regarding the safeguarding of a child or adult at risk please contact Fran Gale on fran.gale@wgc.org.uk - Education Development Lead for the Wellcome Genome Campus.

Impact

Always remember to strive for high quality two-way engagement projects. The online information sphere is a very crowded space and having well thought through targeted projects co-developed with specific audience groups is much more impactful.

Before embarking on an online activity, discuss with the public engagement team first who will be able to offer advice on the best approaches.

Keep platform audiences in mind when choosing how to do your online engagement. Things like blogs and twitter accounts might be well used by academic audiences but public audience web use can be very different.

Where possible please consider accessibility and include closed captions alongside any video resources or recordings produced. Block capital text can be hard to read so any text used should be in sentence case. Consider accessible text-background contrast and colour palettes appropriate for colour-blind participants, especially if using detailed graphics.

Support

As with any public engagement project we would recommend you discuss any plans with the public engagement team first. They will be able to signpost you to relevant funding streams, collaborators and potentially existing programmes that could boost your impact whilst saving work. You can contact the team via email at engage@wgc.org.uk.

STEM ambassadors can access further training and support through STEM Learning and local ambassador hubs (SETPOINT Hertfordshire).

Tips and Tricks

Always check your tech and set up with the relevant programme before the session itself. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Audio
- Visual
- Chat function
- Recording ability (and check where this file saves to!)
- Background of the visual stream
- All non essential programmes and windows are closed / hidden
- All phones, email, messaging, etc. notifications are turned off for the duration of the session

Organising a practice run through with the public engagement team is often the best way to ensure everything is working the way you need it to be.

Always have a backup plan ready for every aspect of the session.

Run sessions through the public engagement Zoom account (you can be added as a co-host) to ensure the optimum settings are enabled on the account.

Refer to institute specific guidance on using social media platforms if you want to explore making better use of your social media presence for public engagement.

Useful Links

Campus Activities and Resource Website:

www.yourgenome.org

Setting Up Zoom as a Classroom:

www.weareteachers.com/zoom-for-teachers/?utm_content=1585318499&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&fbclid=IwAR1d4sDMv3enG-3xclg9ikClo7sqhpx_1eSCcwLohFRtJ0ZvUy4s6Ooxjrk

Insights into Social Media Platform Usage:

www.sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/

Information and Guidance for Different Social Media Platforms:

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

What Works: Engaging the Public Through Social Media - a Guide

https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/what_works_engaging_the_public_through_social_media_november_2018.pdf

Safeguarding Adults Good Practice Framework

<https://www.adass.org.uk/adassmedia/stories/publications/guidance/safeguarding.pdf>

Government Guidance on Working to Safeguard Children

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

UK Law Relating to Safeguarding:

[Children Act 1989](#)

[Children Act 2004](#)

[Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)

[Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)

To report or discuss concerns about a child's welfare you can contact the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (24 hours):

- Tel: 0808 800 5000
- Textphone: 0800 056 0566
- Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Declaration

By signing here I confirm that I have read and understood the guidance in this document:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____