

Safeguarding Team

Digital Safeguarding Community Standards

Guide for Participants

Being online with the British Council – community standards

What we expect from you:

We need you to contribute to upholding British Council standards and expectations when you are online. This includes:

- Always being polite, respectful, and considerate to other members of the group.
- Being considerate and thoughtful about your behaviour and thinking about other people's feelings. Bullying, aggression, or offensive remarks of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Share only the information that is relevant to the purpose and activities of the group. Spam, posts, or links that are not relevant to its purpose will not be allowed.
- Always keep your username and password safe and do not share it with others. Use only your own account to interact in the group.
- When working in groups we require you to communicate openly in a manner that all members in the group can see/read. Sending direct messages to other members is discouraged.
- Ensure that you report any messages/communications or actions that are inappropriate or make you feel uncomfortable.
- Respect the privacy of the groups you are working in and please do not share anyone's personal information onwards without consent.
- Exchanges within the platform should never be shared outside of the platform, either online or offline unless such a decision is agreed by consensus.

Our commitment to you

Any online digital interactions that you engage in that are run by the British Council should be well run and safe.

It is important that you report to us anything that has happened online in a British Council led or sponsored interaction that has made you feel upset or unsafe. You can report anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. If someone has done something that makes you upset or uncomfortable it doesn't matter what their role is, whether they work for the British Council or are a partner, it is fair to raise it with them or to make a report to the Safeguarding Team.

We expect our staff and partners to always treat you with dignity and respect and they will be sensitive to your age, gender, ethnicity, background, sexuality, religion, and other important personal characteristics.

It is important that:

- You are only asked to participate in 1-2-1 interactions online that are part of a clearly agreed British Council activity.
- If you are under 18 it is important that your parents or carers are aware of when you are using digital devices for British Council interactions and know when and where you are online
- The Apps, services, and technical tools you are using are appropriate for your age and you have been told how to set privacy settings and sign up to services safely.
- You have been given expectations about behaviour and ground rules online, how you should behave and what to expect of others. If you are exposed to content or behaviour that upsets you in a British Council led digital session or interaction, or from anyone you know through British Council activity – you should report it.
- You are not under pressure to use Apps or services in ways you are not comfortable.

Sometimes being online can change the way people interact with each other. Some Apps in particular encourage less formal ways of communicating. British Council staff or partners should not do the following in any online (or offline) interaction with you:

- Test or blur boundaries between being a teacher in a position of authority and a friend. An example of this might be asking you to connect with them on social media outside of lessons.
- Make personal comments about your appearance or any other aspect of your identity that makes you uncomfortable and which isn't relevant to British Council business (teaching, english, exams or cultural engagement)
- Make sexual jokes or sexual remarks or allow these interactions to occur online via chat functions set up by British Council.
- Tease or bully you or allow bullying, rude or aggressive behaviour to occur online during British Council interactions.
- Share online content in class that is sexual, violent, or discriminatory or irrelevant to British Council business.

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