



Severn Mentoring
IT, Online Safety & Acceptable Use Policy
(Community Mentoring & Alternative Provision – September 2025)

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out Severn Mentoring's approach to safe, responsible and lawful use of technology, internet access and digital communication.

It applies to:

- All Severn Mentoring staff, volunteers and service users (mentees and learners).
- All electronic equipment owned, provided, or accessed for Severn Mentoring purposes, including laptops, tablets, phones, and online platforms.
- Any internet use that occurs during Severn Mentoring sessions, including supervised tuition or mentoring activities in community spaces.

This policy supports:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025*
 - *UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018*
 - *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*
 - *Keeping Learners Safe (Wales)*
 - *UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) Education for a Connected World Framework (2024)*
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2. Policy Statement and Aims

Severn Mentoring recognises that technology is a powerful educational and communication tool but also presents risks if misused.

Our aims are to:

- Safeguard all learners and staff from online harm.
 - Promote safe, responsible and respectful use of digital platforms.
 - Prevent cyberbullying, exploitation and exposure to inappropriate content.
 - Ensure all use of technology supports learning, wellbeing and positive engagement.
 - Protect Severn Mentoring's data and reputation.
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3. Acceptable Use Statement for Service Users

All learners and service users who access Severn Mentoring technology or use the internet during sessions must agree to the following **Acceptable Use Agreement**:

Service User Commitments

1. **Respectful Behaviour:**
 - I will use technology responsibly, treating others with respect in all online interactions.
 - I will not use abusive, threatening or discriminatory language.
2. **Appropriate Use:**
 - I will only use devices, apps and websites for mentoring, tuition or approved activities.
 - I will not access, download or share inappropriate, illegal or harmful content.
3. **Privacy and Safety:**
 - I will never share personal details or images of myself or others online.
 - I will not use others' logins or attempt to access restricted areas.
 - I will report anything online that makes me uncomfortable or worried.
4. **Cyberbullying and Respect:**
 - I understand that cyberbullying, online gossip or harassment is not acceptable and will lead to intervention or removal from sessions.
5. **Device Responsibility:**
 - I will handle Severn Mentoring devices carefully and return them as instructed.
 - I will not install or delete apps or alter security settings.
6. **Social Media:**
 - I will not contact Severn Mentoring staff through personal social media accounts.
 - Any digital communication will take place through approved professional channels.

By participating in Severn Mentoring sessions, learners and parents/carers agree to follow this Acceptable Use Statement.

4. Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

All staff must:

- Model safe, respectful and lawful use of technology.
- Only use Severn Mentoring-approved devices and accounts for work purposes.
- Never contact mentees via personal phones or social media.
- Report any safeguarding or online safety concern to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** immediately.
- Keep devices secure and lock screens when unattended.
- Store and share digital files only via encrypted or password-protected systems.

Breaches of these expectations will be addressed under Severn Mentoring's disciplinary or safeguarding procedures as appropriate.

5. Anti-Bullying (Online / Cyberbullying)

Severn Mentoring has **zero tolerance** for any form of online bullying or digital harassment.

Cyberbullying includes:

- Sending, posting or sharing negative, harmful or false content about someone online.
- Using text messages, social media, gaming or other digital platforms to intimidate or humiliate.

Prevention and Response:

- Staff discuss digital behaviour and kindness during mentoring sessions.
- Learners are supported to recognise the impact of online words and actions.
- Any report of cyberbullying is recorded, investigated and addressed under the **Behaviour & Code of Conduct Policy**.
- Parents, schools and local authorities are informed where appropriate.
- Serious or repeated incidents may lead to removal from online access or referral to safeguarding authorities.

Our anti-bullying approach aligns with:

- *KCSIE 2025 – Online Safety Section*
- *Rights, Respect, Equality* (Welsh Gov, 2019)

6. Internet Use – Filtering, Monitoring & Supervision

Because Severn Mentoring operates primarily in community and tuition settings, internet safety relies on **supervision, controlled access and staff vigilance**.

At Severn Mentoring sites:

- Internet access is **filtered and monitored** via provider-level controls to block inappropriate content (violence, extremism, pornography, hate speech, gambling, etc.).
- Monitoring software flags search terms or activity that may indicate risk.
- Logs are reviewed by the Service Manager / DSL.

In the Community:

- Staff are responsible for supervising all internet use by mentees during sessions (e.g., café Wi-Fi, mobile hotspot, community hubs).
- If secure access cannot be guaranteed, the mentor should restrict online activity to offline learning tasks.
- Public Wi-Fi must never be used for personal or confidential information.

Remote Learning / Tuition Platforms:

- Only approved educational or communication platforms may be used (e.g., Teams, Zoom with password entry, or safeguarding-approved software).
- Sessions must never be recorded without consent and purpose.
- The DSL reviews any online delivery methods to ensure safeguarding compliance.

7. Data Protection and Privacy

All digital communication and storage must comply with the **UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018**.

- Personal data must never be shared via unsecured email or cloud storage.

- Staff must log out of systems after use.
- Any suspected data breach must be reported immediately to the **Data Protection Lead**.

(See the Severn Mentoring **Data Protection Policy** for full details.)

8. Education and Awareness

Severn Mentoring actively teaches young people to:

- Recognise online risks such as grooming, scams, misinformation and cyberbullying.
 - Protect personal information and use strong passwords.
 - Report concerns safely and confidently.
 - Engage positively and respectfully in online communities.
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9. Monitoring and Review

- The DSL and Service Manager review IT use, incidents and security logs termly.
 - Policy effectiveness is assessed after any online incident or guidance update.
 - The policy is reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes.
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10. Named Leads

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Richard KEAR

Data Protection Lead (DPL): Richard Kear

IT / Systems Contact: Josh Carter

Approved by: Directors / DSL

Date: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

Applies to: All Severn Mentoring staff, volunteers, and service users